(2)

Supreme Court, U.S.
FILED
FEB 10 1989
JOSEPH F. SPANIOL, JR.
CLERK

NO. 88-1137

IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 1988

INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA, UAW,

Petitioner,

v.

MACK TRUCKS, INC.,

Respondent.

ON PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT

RESPONDENT'S BRIEF IN OPPOSITION

*CARTER R. BULLER
EDWARD T. ELLIS
JOEL C. SCHOCHET
ELIZABETH P. HARRIS
Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads
Three Parkway, 20th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 563-0650

Attorneys for Respondent, Mack Trucks, Inc.

*Counsel of Record

Dated: February 10, 1989

WINCHELL FINANCIAL Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 496-3664

84 pp

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether an employer who cannot contractually initiate grievances or submit grievances to arbitration may commence an action in court under Section 301 of the Labor-Management Relations Act when there is no pending grievance addressing the employer's claim.
2. Whether a collective bargaining agreement may be valid and enforceable without addressing an issue not negotiated by the parties to the agreement.
3. Whether a federal district court, in the course of determining whether a valid and enforceable collective bargaining agreement exists, may inquire as to the understandings of the parties regarding the terms of that agreement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
QUESTIONS PRESENTED	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
TABLE OF AUTHORITIES	iv
COUNTERSTATEMENT OF THE CASE	1
REASONS FOR DENYING THE WRIT	9
I. THE HOLDING OF THE COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT THAT THE GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION PROCEDURE SET FORTH IN THE PARTIES' AGREEMENTS DID NOT BAR RESPONDENT'S DECLARATORY JUDGMENT ACTION IS NOT IN CONFLICT WITH THE DECISIONS OF THIS COURT OR OTHER COURTS OF APPEALS	9
A. The Result Reached By The Third Circuit Is Consistent With Supreme Court Precedent	9
B. The Petition Of The UAW Does Not Establish The Existence Of A Conflict Among The Circuits Concerning The Right Of An Employer To Commence An Action In Court When That Employer Is Unable To Submit Its Claims To Binding Arbitration	13
C. The Case Law The UAW Asserts As Two "Distinct Lines Of Lower Court Authority" Are Actually Consistent Lines Of Authority Growing From A Common Source To Address Two Distinct Issues	15

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

II. PETITIONER'S CHALLENGE TO THE DECISION OF THE THIRD CIRCUIT DOES NOT RAISE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS WARRANTING GRANT OF THE PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI 20

A. The Issue Of Eligibility For Step Increases In Pension Benefits Is An Issue Of Fact And Not Appropriate For The Grant Of A Writ Of Certiorari 20

B. The District Court's Finding Of A Meeting Of The Minds Between The Parties Is An Issue Of Fact And Not Appropriate For The Grant Of A Writ Of Certiorari 22

CONCLUSION 26

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

CASES: Page

Affiliated Food Distributors, Inc. v. Local 229, Teamsters, 483 F.2d 418 (3d Cir. 1973), *cert. denied*, 415 U.S. 916 (1974) 13

Allis-Chalmers Corp. v. Lueck, 471 U.S. 202 (1985) 25

Alloy Cast Steel Co. v. United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO, 429 F. Supp. 445 (N.D. Ohio 1977) 14

American Federation of Television & Radio Artists, AFL-CIO v. Inner City Broadcasting Corp., 748 F.2d 884 (2d Cir. 1984) 25

AT & T Technologies, Inc. v. Communications Workers of America, 475 U.S. 643 (1986) 9,11,12

Atkinson v. Sinclair Refining Co., 370 U.S. 238, *aff'd*, 370 U.S. 195 (1962) ..... *passim*

Baker v. Schofield, 243 U.S. 114 (1917) 15

Basic Inc. v. Levinson, — U.S. —, 108 S. Ct. 978 (1988) 21

Blake Construction Co., Inc. v. Laborers' International Union of North America, AFL-CIO, 511 F.2d 324 (D.C. Cir. 1975) 13

Bobbie Brooks, Inc. v. International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, 835 F.2d 1164 (6th Cir. 1987) 22,23,25

Boeing Co. v. International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, 370 F.2d 969 (3d Cir. 1967) 13

Boys Markets, Inc. v. Retail Clerks, Union Local 770, 398 U.S. 235 (1970) 16,17

Page

Buffalo Forge Co. v. United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO, 428 U.S. 397 (1976) 12

Controlled Sanitation Corp. v. District 128, International Ass'n of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO, 524 F.2d 1324 (3d Cir. 1975), *cert. denied*, 424 U.S. 915 (1976) 14

Drake Bakeries, Inc. v. Bakery Workers Local 50, 370 U.S. 254 (1962) 10

Eberle Tanning Co. v. Section 63L, FLM Joint Board, Allegheny Division, United Food and Commercial Workers' International Union, 682 F.2d 430 (3d Cir. 1982) 13

Faultless Division v. Local Lodge No. 2040 of District 153, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, 513 F.2d 987 (7th Cir. 1975) 14

Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. v. International Union, of United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America, AFL-CIO, 476 F.2d 603 (5th Cir. 1973) 14

Ford v. First Municipal Leasing Corp., 838 F.2d 994 (8th Cir. 1988) 21

Friedrich v. Local No. 780, International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, 515 F.2d 225 (5th Cir. 1975) 14

G.T. Schjeldahl Co., Packaging Machinery Division v. Local Lodge No. 1680, 393 F.2d 502 (1st Cir. 1968) 13

Gariup v. Birchler Ceiling & Interior Co., Inc., 777 F.2d 370 (7th Cir. 1985) 11

Page

Georgia Kraft Co., Woodkraft Division v. N.L.R.B., 696 F.2d 931 (11th Cir.), *reh'g denied*, 704 F.2d 1253 (11th Cir.), *cert. granted*, 464 U.S. 981 (1983), *vacated in part*, 466 U.S. 901 (1984) 22

Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. v. Ray-O-Vac Co., 321 U.S. 275 (1944) 15

Granite State Distributors, Inc., 266 N.L.R.B. 457 (1983) 25

Graver Tank & Manufacturing Co. v. Linde Air Products Co., 336 U.S. 271, *reh'g granted*, 337 U.S. 910 (1949), *rev'd in part*, 339 U.S. 605 (1950) 14

H.K. Porter Co., Inc., Connors Steel Division, West Virginia Works v. Local 37, United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO, 400 F.2d 691 (4th Cir. 1968) 14

International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union v. Ashland Industries, Inc., 488 F.2d 641 (5th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 419 U.S. 840 (1974) 11

Interprint Co., 273 N.L.R.B. 1863 (1985) 24

John Wiley & Sons, Inc. v. Livingston, 376 U.S. 543 (1964) 9,25

Latas Libby's, Inc. v. United Steelworkers of America, 609 F.2d 25 (1st Cir. 1979) 13

Laundry, Dry Cleaning and Dye House Workers International Union, Local 93 v. Mahoney, 491 F.2d 1029 (8th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 419 U.S. 825 (1974) 14

Lehigh Portland Cement Co. v. Cement, Lime, Gypsum and Allied Workers, 849 F.2d 820 (3d Cir. 1988) 13,15

Page

Moldovan v. Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., Inc., 790 F.2d 894 (3d Cir. 1986), *cert. denied*, 108 S. Ct. 1074 (1988) 11

NLRB v. Deauville Hotel, 751 F.2d 1562 (11th Cir. 1985) 23

NLRB v. Donna-Lee Sportswear Co., Inc., 836 F.2d 31 (1st Cir. 1987) 11

NLRB v. Haberman Construction Co., 641 F.2d 351 (5th Cir. 1981) 25

NLRB v. New York-Keansburg-Long Branch Bus Co., Inc., 578 F.2d 472 (3d Cir. 1978) 25

Oxco Brush Division of Vistron Corp. v. International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO, 538 F.2d 329 (6th Cir. 1976), *aff'g without opinion* 93 L.R.R.M. 2721 (M.D. Tenn. 1974), *cert. denied*, 429 U.S. 1072 (1977) 14

Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. v. NLRB, 659 F.2d 87 (8th Cir. 1981) 25

Reid Burton Construction, Inc. v. Carpenters District Council of Southern Colorado, 535 F.2d 598 (10th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 429 U.S. 907 (1976) 14

Roadway Express, Inc. v. General Teamsters Union, Local 249, 330 F.2d 859 (3d Cir. 1964) 22

Rochdale Village, Inc. v. Public Service Employees' Union, Local No. 80, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 605 F.2d 1290 (2d Cir. 1979) 13

Sinclair Refining Co. v. Atkinson, 370 U.S. 195 (1962) 16

Textile Workers Union v. Lincoln Mills of Alabama, 353 U.S. 448 (1957) 25

Page

United States v. Johnson, 268 U.S. 220 (1925) 14

United Steelworkers of America v. Warrior & Gulf Navigation Co., 363 U.S. 574 (1960) 21

Warehousemen's Union Local No. 206 v. Continental Can Co., Inc., 821 F.2d 1348 (9th Cir. 1987) 23

Washington Heights-West Harlem-Inwood Health Council, Inc. v. District 1199, National Union of Hospital & Health Care Employees, AFL-CIO, 748 F.2d 105 (2d Cir. 1984) 24

STATUTES:

29 U.S.C. § 185 ..... *passim*
29 U.S.C. § 104 16

OTHER AUTHORITIES:

Cox, *Reflections Upon Labor Arbitration*, 71 Harv. L. Rev. 1482 (1959) 21

No. 88-1137

IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 1988

INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA, UAW,

Petitioner,

v.

MACK TRUCKS, INC.,

Respondent.

ON PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT

RESPONDENT'S BRIEF IN OPPOSITION

COUNTERSTATEMENT OF THE CASE

Respondent Mack Trucks, Inc. ("Mack" or "the Company")[1] is a manufacturer of heavy-duty trucks headquartered in Allentown, Pennsylvania. On October 30, 1984,

1. Respondent provides the following information pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 28.1. As of October, 1988, 43.3 percent of the stock of Respondent Mack Trucks, Inc. was owned by Renault Vehicules Industriels. The remaining 56.7 percent of the stock of Respondent is owned and traded publicly by the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System (NASDAQ). Respondent has no affiliates or subsidiaries other than wholly-owned subsidiaries.

Mack and Petitioner International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, UAW ("UAW" or "the Union") entered into a three-year master collective bargaining agreement governing Mack's facilities in Allentown and Macungie, Pennsylvania, Hagerstown, Maryland, and Bridgewater, New Jersey. This agreement ("the 1984 Master Agreement") was scheduled to expire on October 20, 1987. A-827, 874.[2]

In late 1986, George Smith, Director of UAW Region 8, informed Mack that UAW Local 171, which represented Mack shop employees in Hagerstown, Maryland, wished to negotiate job security improvements for its membership. T-1, Oct. 1 at 161. Although the Local 171 agreement was not to expire until October 20, 1987, Mack, the UAW and Local 171 negotiated and executed in late-1986 a Memorandum of Understanding that covered the period January 5, 1987 through January 5, 1993. By the end of January 1987, in response to the request of Owen Bieber, President of the UAW, Mack had entered into similar Memoranda of Understanding with each of the other three UAW local unions covered by the 1984 Master Agreement. By the Memoranda of Understanding, Mack and the UAW locals sought to accommodate their respective needs for long-term economic stability and long-term job security. T-1, Oct. 1 at 163-64.

When the UAW local unions submitted the proposed contracts to the International Union, UAW for approval, the UAW Executive Board rejected them. Mack then agreed to enter into mid-term negotiations with the International Union and the UAW locals for a new Master Agreement. A-1. To this end, the UAW and Mack met on February 28, 1987 and throughout most of the week of March 7-14, 1987.

---

2. For the convenience of the Court, Respondent has followed the form utilized by Petitioner for citations to the Appendix to this Brief and to the record below. Citations to the Appendix to this Brief will be in the form "App. —." Citations to the record below will be made by reference to the seven volume Joint Appendix filed with the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and will be in the form "A —" for exhibits or "T-1, Oct. 1, 1987 p. —" for trial transcripts.

During these meetings, the parties agreed to most of what would later become the 1987 Master Agreement; indeed, many of the terms were simply carried forward from the 1984 Master Agreement. On March 28, 1987, the Company presented to the Union a proposal to resolve outstanding issues, and set a deadline of April 22, 1987 for reaching a final agreement. T-1, Oct. 1 at 169-173.

Two pending grievances raised issues that figured prominently in the Mack-UAW negotiations.[3] In the first, which concerned the Company's decision to close the Allentown assembly facility ("plant 5C"), the UAW maintained that the announcement of the decision to close plant 5C violated the plant closing moratorium letter in the 1984 Master Agreement. The second grievance concerned the replacement plant in Winnsboro, South Carolina; to wit, the Union's claims that it was contractually entitled to be the collective bargaining representative at the Winnsboro plant, that Winnsboro was automatically covered by the Mack-UAW Master Agreement, and that members of its Mack-UAW Master Agreement bargaining units had contractual rights to transfer to Winnsboro. Mack disputed the Union's position on the merits of the two grievances and in addition interposed a significant procedural issue with respect to the first grievance (timeliness). T-1, Oct. 1 at 31; T-1, Oct. 2 at 39, 55. In the course of the negotiations, it became evident that these so called "Winnsboro issues" were the principal stumbling blocks to reaching a new agreement.

At the behest of high-ranking government officials in Pennsylvania and Maryland, Mack and the Union agreed in early April to retain the services of former United States Secretary of Labor William J. Usery to mediate their nego-

---

3. The 1984 Master Agreement contains what is known in industry as an "employee oriented" grievance procedure, whereby aggrieved employees can invoke a dispute resolution process that leads through four intermediate steps to arbitration. After the initial filing by an employee or the Union, the movement from step-to-step is the prerogative of the Union.

tiations. Pursuant to Mr. Usery's request, the parties met in Crystal City, Virginia from April 18 through April 23, 1987. App. at 32a (Findings 6-7); A-2014-15; T-1, Oct. 1 at 176.

After four days of negotiations at Crystal City, Mack and the UAW acceded to the suggestion of mediator Usery that they "carve out" the Winnsboro issues from the new agreement. In the "carve out" agreement, Mack agreed to proceed to expedited arbitration of the Winnsboro grievances on May 5-6, 1987, agreed to waive its procedural defenses and agreed to accept a bench decision from the arbitrator with no right of appeal. (Arthur Stark, former President of the National Academy of Arbitrators, had already been selected as the Arbitrator).

The parties achieved the carve out agreement on the night of April 22-23, 1987. Once the carve out was achieved, Mack and the UAW reached agreement on the issues outstanding within hours. App. at 33a (Finding 9); A-2015, 2021. At the conclusion of an all night bargaining session that ended early in the morning of April 23, the parties shook hands with each other and with Mr. Usery and his assistant. App. at 33a (Finding 9); A-2015.

The district court found (and the court of appeals affirmed) that the new agreement provides Mack with five and one half years of labor stability, increased productivity and an initial wage concession. The district court found a long list of provisions beneficial to the Union and its members, including, *inter alia,* job security through a ban on plant closings and outsourcing not then scheduled, more than $120 million in capital expenditures at Mack's Macungie and Hagerstown plants, and across-the-board pension and insurance increases. App. at 33a-35a (Finding 11); A-2015-18; T-1, Oct. 1 at 47, 63. The district court also found (and the court of appeals affirmed) that the parties never discussed (during the negotiations at Crystal City) whether certain step increases in pension benefits were to be effective in 1987 or 1988. App. at 46a; 27a-28a.

The new agreement was to become effective on May 4, 1987, subject only to ratification by the Union's membership. T-1, Oct. 1 at 53-54; A-1114. On May 3, the membership of the UAW local unions voted overwhelmingly to ratify the new agreement. App. at 36a (Findings 17-19); A-2019.

The following day, Pennsylvania Governor Robert P. Casey held a televised press conference in Allentown to celebrate the "Crystal City Accord." At the press conference, Governor Casey congratulated both Mack and the UAW on the new agreement, and Mr. Usery, UAW Regional Director Tom Natchuras, and UAW Local Union 677 President Kim Blake also spoke and confirmed that a new master agreement had been reached. App. at 36a (Finding 20); A-2019-20.

On May 5 and 6, 1987, pursuant to the carve out agreement, the parties presented the Winnsboro grievances to Arbitrator Stark. At the outset of the arbitration hearing, counsel of record for the UAW, one of its associate general counsel, stated that Mack and the UAW had entered into a five and one half year agreement, and that the ground rules for the arbitration were fixed as part of the new agreement. Due to the complexity of the issues, the Arbitrator did not render a bench decision. Thereafter, at the request of the UAW, the parties filed post-hearing briefs.

For the next six weeks, Mack and the UAW exchanged proposed contract language reflecting the terms of the new agreement. The parties also met on several occasions in an attempt to memorialize their agreement. The district court found that as of June 19, 1987, the job of memorializing the new agreement, although not completed, was on course. App. at 37a (Finding 23); A-2021.

On June 19, Arbitrator Stark issued his Award (the "Stark Award"), finding against the Union on most points. He upheld Mack's position that the announced closing of plant 5C did not violate the 1984 Master Agreement, found that the Union was not entitled to automatic recognition as

the collective bargaining representative at the new Winnsboro assembly facility, and found that in the event the UAW obtained representative status, the Winnsboro plant would not automatically fall under the UAW-Mack Master Agreement. In the only portion of the Award to go in the Union's favor, Arbitrator Stark held that certain classes of Mack-UAW represented employees had transfer rights to Winnsboro.[4] In his award, Arbitrator Stark also made the observation that "Mack and the UAW entered into a 5½ year master contract to replace the existing one." App. at 37a (Finding 22); A-741; A-2021; T-1, Oct. 2 at 16-17; A-738-49.

Having failed to obtain the significant result it sought in the Stark Award, the Union attempted to derail the Crystal City agreement. As the district court found,

> Following the receipt of the arbitration award, the Union did not act reasonably, properly, or promptly to complete the task of reducing the oral agreement to writing.

App. at 37a (Finding 23(a)).

Initially, it stopped discussing the language of the agreement with the Company. The district court found that

> Mr. Collins, a Union negotiator, admitted in his testimony that as a result of the Winnsboro arbitration award and problems with the company regarding the implementation of that award, the Union would not complete the task of drafting the contract language for the agreement reached at Crystal City, Virginia.

App. at 37a (Finding 23(b)).

Then, on July 2, using the employee oriented procedure described above, the Union filed a grievance challenging certain unspecified changes Mack allegedly had implemented in the 1987 Master Agreement. The grievance in its entirety stated:

---

4. Mack subsequently allowed employees to transfer to Winnsboro as a result of that arbitration. T-1, Oct. 1 at 64; T-2, Oct. 5 at 94-95.

> The Union protests the Company unilaterally implementing changes in the Master and Local current Agreement which only benefited them. The Company implemented changes on June 8, 1987, which did not reflect the understandings which we had reached with the Company.
>
> RELIEF REQUESTED Reimburse all employees monies lost and revert back to the prior Agreement.

App. at 5a n.2; A-2007.

By letter dated July 6, 1987 from UAW Vice President Bill Casstevens to Mack Chairman of the Board, President, and Chief Executive Officer John B. Curcio, the UAW asserted, contrary to the handshakes at Crystal City, the UAW membership ratification, the declaration of its own attorney, and the Governor's televised press conference, that no meeting of the minds had occurred at Crystal City and that no new collective bargaining agreement existed until it was reduced to writing. A-751. The Union also refused to continue to reduce the new agreement to writing and threatened economic action, *i.e.*, a strike. App. at 37a-38a (Findings 23(a), 24), 41a-42a; A-2022. Casstevens reiterated this position on July 10, 1987, in a letter to Mack Vice-President, Human Resources W. Dennis Guinan. In summary, as the district court found:

> The Union's refusal to complete the process of reducing the new master agreement to writing was designed to exert pressure on Mack in regard to the Winnsboro issues and did not arise from any disagreement as to what had been agreed upon at Crystal City.

App. at 38a (Finding 26).

On July 14, 1987, after the UAW persisted in its repudiation of the new agreement and continued to threaten economic action, Mack filed an action in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Mack sought a declaratory judgment that the collective bargaining agreement between the parties, finalized on April

Crystal City after months of negotiations and ratified by the Union membership on May 3, 1987, was valid and enforceable.

The district court heard the case without a jury beginning on September 30, 1987. On October 9, the district court issued an Order declaring the existence of a new collective bargaining agreement. In its opinion issued October 26, 1987, the district court concluded

> A new master collective bargaining agreement exists between Mack and the Union effective May 4, 1987, until November 3, 1992. The terms of this master collective bargaining agreement are set forth in plaintiff's exhibit 80 as modified by this opinion and by the record in this case.

App. at 48a (Conclusion 2).

As set forth above, the district court also found that the Union's refusal to reduce the new agreement to writing was not the product of any real dispute, but was intended to exert pressure on Mack with regard to the Winnsboro issues that the Union had lost before Stark. App. at 38a (Finding 26); A-2023. The district court additionally found that the issue of eligibility for certain pension step increases "seems to have been passed over at Crystal City and therefore no meeting of the minds was reached with respect to it." App. at 46a; A-2035.

Following an appeal by the UAW, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit affirmed the Order of the district court. The court of appeals held that the district court had jurisdiction of this action under Section 301 of the Labor-Management Relations Act, as amended, ("LMRA"), 29 U.S.C. § 185; that the district court's jurisdiction was not preempted by the jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Board; and that the employee oriented grievance and arbitration procedure set forth in the 1984 Master Agreement was not a bar to Mack's declaratory judgment action. Moreover, the court concluded that the district court did not err in finding that the parties had entered into a new collective bargaining agreement.

REASONS FOR DENYING THE WRIT

I. THE HOLDING OF THE COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT THAT THE GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION PROCEDURE SET FORTH IN THE PARTIES' AGREEMENTS DID NOT BAR RESPONDENT'S DECLARATORY JUDGMENT ACTION IS NOT IN CONFLICT WITH THE DECISIONS OF THIS COURT OR OTHER COURTS OF APPEALS

A. The Result Reached By The Third Circuit Is Consistent With Supreme Court Precedent

Whether a company is bound by contract to arbitrate, as well as what issues it must arbitrate, are matters to be determined by a district court on the basis of the agreement entered into by the parties. *AT & T Technologies, Inc. v. Communications Workers of America,* 475 U.S. 643, 649 (1986); *John Wiley & Sons, Inc. v. Livingston,* 376 U.S. 543, 546 (1964). If the agreement does not provide for grievance and arbitration initiated by the employer, then the employer has not agreed to arbitrate and he is free to invoke federal court jurisdiction under Section 301 of the Labor-Management Relations Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 185. As this Court stated in analyzing the collective bargaining agreement in *Atkinson v. Sinclair Refining Co.,* 370 U.S. 238, *aff'd,* 370 U.S. 195 (1962):

> There is not a word in the grievance and arbitration article providing for the submission of grievances by the company.... Furthermore, the article expressly provides that arbitration may be invoked only at the option of the union. At no place in the contract does the union agree to arbitrate at the behest of the company. The company is to take its claims elsewhere, which it has now done.

370 U.S. at 243.

Noting that it was "unquestionably clear that the contract . . . is not susceptible to a construction that the company was bound to arbitrate its claim for damages against the union for breach of the undertaking not to strike", *id.* at 241-42, the Court held in *Atkinson* that the employer was not bound to arbitrate its claim before instituting suit. *Id.* at 241.[5]

Like the employer in *Atkinson,* Mack was compelled to file suit to obtain review of its claim. Article 5 of both the 1984 and 1987 Master Agreements between Mack and the UAW, titled "Grievance Procedure," provides, in relevant part, that:

> Section 1. Informal Step
>
> In the event that any employee has a grievance or any group of employees have a grievance, the employee having such grievance or the group having a grievance or a designated member thereof shall, before a written grievance is filed pursuant to Section 2 below, take up the grievance in the following manner: ....
>
> Section 7 (d).
>
> In the event any dispute shall not have been settled by the foregoing grievance procedure, including the Review Step, the Union may submit the dispute to arbitration.

App. at 21a, n.13; A-832, 834.

There is no provision in the Article 5 Grievance Procedure pursuant to which Mack can file a grievance or submit a dispute to arbitration. This language is similar to that

---

5. In contrast to *Atkinson* is *Drake Bakeries, Inc. v. Bakery Workers Local 50,* 370 U.S. 254 (1962), decided on the same day as *Atkinson.* Unlike the parties here and in *Atkinson,* the parties in *Drake* had agreed to arbitrate "all complaints, disputes, or grievances arising between them involving ... any act or conduct or relation between the parties." 370 U.S. at 257 & n.2. Because the broad language of that contract did not exclude claims or complaints of the employer, the Court distinguished *Atkinson* and resolved the question in favor of arbitration. *Id.* at 257-64.

contained in the agreement at issue in *Atkinson,* and the Third Circuit's holding is consistent with the holding of this Court in *Atkinson.*

The UAW contends here, as it did in the court of appeals, that the existence of a contract grievance procedure controlled by the Union and the pendency of a grievance initiated by the Union barred the district court from deciding whether the parties had entered into a new agreement. The UAW ignores here, as it did in the court of appeals, the fundamental principle that while the district courts are to defer to the arbital process "unless it may be said with positive assurance that the arbitration clause is not susceptible of an interpretation that covers the asserted dispute," *AT & T Technologies, Inc. v. Communications Workers of America,* 475 U.S. at 650, the district courts are not to defer to arbitration under Section 301 when the issue is whether a contract exists between the parties. *NLRB v. Donna-Lee Sportswear Co., Inc.,* 836 F.2d 31, 36 (1st Cir. 1987); *Moldovan v. Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., Inc.,* 790 F.2d 894, 897 (3d Cir. 1986), *cert. denied,* 108 S. Ct. 1074 (1988); *Gariup v. Birchler Ceiling & Interior Co., Inc.,* 777 F.2d 370, 373 & n. 8 (7th Cir. 1985); *International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union v. Ashland Industries, Inc.,* 488 F.2d 641, 644 (5th Cir.), *cert. denied,* 419 U.S. 840 (1974). This is a corollary to the principle that a labor arbitrator does not have the "power to determine his own jurisdiction." *AT & T Technologies, Inc. v. Communications Workers of America,* 475 U.S. at 651.

In addressing the Union's arbitration contentions, the court of appeals noted that while the Union had in fact filed a grievance, the grievance was not on a subject cognizable under the terms of the 1984 agreement. Contrary to the contention of the UAW, the grievance did not allege a violation of Article 32 of the 1984 agreement, which provides that negotiations for modification or amendment of the agreement are not binding unless reduced to writing and

signed by designated parties.[6] The court rejected this argument of the UAW on two grounds: (1) that the grievance was not something the Company had agreed to arbitrate because Article 32 did not apply by its own terms to negotiations "directed . . . to the creation of a new labor contract", and (2) that the grievance procedure did not "bear on the existence of a new agreement", but "governs employee disputes only, under the interpretation of the 1984 agreement." App. at 21a. Because Article 5 was an employee oriented grievance procedure, the court of appeals held that it was insufficient to deprive the district court of jurisdiction under Section 301. App. at 21a-22a. As demonstrated above, this conclusion does no offense to the precedent of this Court, and merits no review in this case.

---

6. The issue of Article 32 arose as a belated attempt by the UAW to shape the parties' dispute into one which could be submitted to arbitration, *i.e.*, whether the provisions of the 1984 Master Agreement were followed. Indeed, in a Memorandum of Law submitted to the district court on July 17, 1987, in opposition to Mack's motion for a preliminary injunction (which was later withdrawn), the Union recognized that the question of whether a contract exists is a matter for the courts. In that Memorandum, the Union noted that in *Buffalo Forge Co. v. United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO*, 428 U.S. 397 (1976), this Court held that notwithstanding the contractual obligation of both parties to arbitrate grievances, a strike in violation of a no-strike clause may not be enjoined unless the underlying dispute was subject to arbitration under the collective bargaining agreement.

The Union argued that under *Buffalo Forge*, the district court could not issue an injunction. "In simple terms, this case involves the question of whether or not there is a new agreement in place. Whether the parties have reached agreement and the terms of any new agreement are *not* issues subject to arbitration." UAW July 17, 1987 Memorandum of Law at 16 (emphasis in original). Thus, at the commencement of this action, the Union recognized the principle consistently held by this Court: The issue of whether an agreement exists is to be decided by the courts. *E.g.*, *AT & T Technologies, Inc. v. Communications Workers of America*, 475 U.S. at 650; *Atkinson*, 370 U.S. at 241. By raising the issue of whether the parties had abided by Article 32, the Union endeavors to sidetrack the Court, as it endeavored to sidetrack the Third Circuit, from the issue presented to the district court, *i.e.*, whether the parties entered into a new valid Master Agreement.

B. The Petition Of The UAW Does Not Establish The Existence Of A Conflict Among The Circuits Concerning The Right Of An Employer To Commence An Action In Court When That Employer Is Unable To Submit Its Claims To Binding Arbitration

The Union does not contend—because it cannot—that there is a split among the Circuit Courts of Appeals concerning the right of an employer to commence a Section 301 action in federal court under the circumstances presented here. Instead, as discussed in part C *infra*, the Union makes only the erroneous argument that two distinct lines of cases need to be reconciled. The absence of conflict among the circuits is further ground for denying the petition.

All ten Circuit Courts of Appeals that have considered employee oriented grievance procedures have either held or otherwise acknowledged that an employer faced with such an "employee oriented" grievance procedure is free to maintain an action against the union under Section 301 in the district courts.[7] The holding in each of these cases, as in the

---

7. **D.C.:** *See Blake Construction Co., Inc. v. Laborers' International Union of North America, AFL-CIO*, 511 F.2d 324, 327-28 & n.30 (D.C. Cir. 1975) (recognizing principle and finding parties' dispute subject to arbitration under language in contract). **First:** *G.T. Schjeldahl Co., Packaging Machinery Division v. Local Lodge No. 1680*, 393 F.2d 502, 504-05 (1st Cir. 1968). *See Latas Libby's, Inc. v. United Steelworkers of America*, 609 F.2d 25, 28 n.4 (1st Cir. 1979) (validating principle in dicta). **Second**: *Cf. Rochdale Village, Inc. v. Public Service Employees' Union, Local No. 80, International Brotherhood of Teamsters*, 605 F.2d 1290, 1295-96 (2d Cir. 1979) (if arbitration clause covers only employee grievances, court should not compel arbitration of questions of contract termination). **Third:** *Lehigh Portland Cement Co. v. Cement, Lime, Gypsum and Allied Workers*, 849 F.2d 820, 822 (3d Cir. 1988); *Affiliated Food Distributors, Inc. v. Local 229, Teamsters*, 483 F.2d 418, 420 (3d Cir. 1973), *cert. denied*, 415 U.S. 916 (1974); *Boeing Co. v. International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America*, 370 F.2d 969, 970-71 (3d Cir. 1967). *See Eberle Tanning Co. v. Section 63L, FLM Joint*

instant case, has been based on an examination of the particular contract language at issue.[8] These cases are consist-

---

Board, Allegheny Division, United Food and Commercial Workers' International Union, 682 F.2d 430, 434 (3d Cir. 1982) (affirming principle and finding that arbitration by company not foreclosed by language of contract); *Controlled Sanitation Corp. v. District 128, International Ass'n of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO*, 524 F.2d 1324, 1328-29 & n.7 (3d Cir. 1975), *cert. denied*, 424 U.S. 915 (1976) (affirming principle and finding grievance procedure not employee oriented). **Fourth:** *See H.K. Porter Co., Inc., Connors Steel Division, West Virginia Works v. Local 37, United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO*, 400 F.2d 691, 694-95 (4th Cir. 1968) (recognizing principle). **Fifth:** *Friedrich v. Local No. 780, International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers*, 515 F.2d 225, 228 (5th Cir. 1975); *Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. v. International Union, of United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America, AFL-CIO*, 476 F.2d 603, 605 (5th Cir. 1973). **Sixth**: *Oxco Brush Division of Vistron Corp. v. International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO*, 538 F.2d 329 (6th Cir. 1976), *aff'g without opinion* 93 L.R.R.M. 2721 (M.D. Tenn. 1974), *cert. denied*, 429 U.S. 1072 (1977). *See Alloy Cast Steel Co. v. United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO*, 429 F. Supp. 445, 449 (N.D. Ohio 1977). **Seventh:** *Faultless Division v. Local Lodge No. 2040 of District 153, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers*, 513 F.2d 987, 990 (7th Cir. 1975). **Eighth:** *Cf. Laundry, Dry Cleaning and Dye House Workers International Union, Local 93 v. Mahoney*, 491 F.2d 1029, 1032-33 & n.5 (8th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 419 U.S. 825 (1974) (concerning same principle but involving refusal by employer of union demand for arbitration; contractual language analyzed and found to include dispute). **Tenth:** *See Reid Burton Construction, Inc. v. Carpenters District Council of Southern Colorado*, 535 F.2d 598, 601 (10th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 429 U.S. 907 (1976) (recognizing principle and finding that grievance procedure was not employee oriented). The holding in each of these cases, as in the instant case, has been based on an examination of the particular contractual language at issue.

8. Issues to be decided on a case by case basis are not appropriate for the grant of a writ of certiorari. *See United States v. Johnson*, 268 U.S. 220, 227 (1925) (Court does not grant certiorari to review evidence and discuss specific facts). This is especially so since the court of appeals declined to disturb the findings of fact made by the district court. It is a well settled rule that this Court cannot undertake to review concurrent findings of fact by two courts below in the absence of a very obvious and exceptional showing of error. *Graver Tank & Manufacturing Co. v. Linde*

ent with the principle that employer claims may be brought to court.[9]

The cases decided by the courts of appeals are consistent with each other on the question presented here. The absence of a conflict suggests that review of the question by this Court is unwarranted.

C. The Case Law The UAW Asserts As Two "Distinct Lines Of Lower Court Authority" Are Actually Consistent Lines Of Authority Growing From A Common Source To Address Two Distinct Issues

The Union seeks to cloud the issue by proposing the existence of two inconsistent lines of cases that might require reconciliation by this Court. One line of cases discussed by the Union includes *Atkinson* and *Lehigh Portland Cement Co. v. Cement, Lime, Gypsum and Allied Workers Division,* 849 F.2d 820 (3d Cir. 1988), the leading case in the Third Circuit. These cases hold that an employer may bring an action in district court even in the face of a mandatory arbitration procedure, if the collective bargaining agree-

---

Air Products Co., 336 U.S. 271, 275 (1949), *reh'g granted,* 337 U.S. 910 (1949), *rev'd in part on other grounds,* 339 U.S. 605 (1950); *Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. v. Ray-O-Vac Co.,* 321 U.S. 275, 278 (1944); *Baker v. Schofield,* 243 U.S. 114, 118 (1917).

9. The Union attempts to distinguish these cases as involving solely the issue of damages resulting from the breach of a no-strike clause. Thus, the Union argues, there could not be a union grievance setting forth the claim which was litigated in court. The Union's argument lacks merit for three distinct reasons: 1) not all of these cases concern damages for violation of a no-strike clause; 2) all of these cases are decided upon the fact that the employer did not have access to the grievance and arbitration procedure, and not upon the fact that there could be no grievance presenting the issue involved in the employer's claim; and 3) in the present matter, the Union did not file a grievance presenting the same issue as the one presented to the district court by Mack.

ment does not provide for the initiation of grievances by the employer.

The second line of cases arises under *Boys Markets, Inc. v. Retail Clerks, Union Local 770,* 398 U.S. 235 (1970).[10] In *Boys Markets,* this Court held that a district court may enjoin a strike as a violation of a no-strike clause, notwithstanding the Norris-LaGuardia Act's prohibition on injunctions "in any case involving or growing out of any labor dispute," 29 U.S.C. § 104, but limited its holding to situations where "both parties are contractually bound to arbitrate." *Id.* at 254. In its petition, the Union argues that courts deciding cases under *Boys Markets* consistently hold that an employer is bound to arbitrate under a mandatory grievance procedure, regardless of whether the employer can initiate grievances under the collective bargaining agreement. Beginning from this false premise, the Union perceives a line of cases separate from that cited by the court of appeals, holding that "even though the procedure may be 'employee oriented,' and may be capable of initiation only by the union, still both parties to the contract are 'bound to arbitrate' disputes which are in fact capable of being processed through that procedure." Pet. at 14.

While many of the cases under *Atkinson* arise out of fact situations similar to those in *Boys Markets* cases, *i.e.,* a strike in breach of a no-strike clause, the legal issues presented are so different as to render *Boys Markets* irrelevant.

Boys Markets cases involve a *union* claim which the union attempts to remedy by striking (in violation of a no-

---

10. In *Boys Markets,* this Court overruled its decision in *Sinclair Refining Co. v. Atkinson,* 370 U.S. 195 (1962), which held that a court may not enjoin a strike under Section 301 of the Labor-Management Relations Act, even if the strike is in breach of a no-strike clause. *Boys Markets,* however, did not disturb this Court's holding in *Atkinson,* 370 U.S. 238, that an employer may proceed to court with its claim if the grievance and arbitration procedure between the parties is wholly employee oriented.

strike clause). Those cases do not involve an *employer* claim, as does the *Atkinson* line of cases.[11] Thus, the two lines of cases are distinguished by which party to the collective bargaining agreement has the claim. The instant matter falls within the *Atkinson* line of cases because the issue is whether Mack, which has no forum in which to submit its own claims other than district court, may pursue its claims under Section 301. Under *Atkinson,* the answer is in the affirmative. *Boys Markets* has no application.

The Union argues that "the 'employee oriented' nature of a grievance procedure is material only when that aspect of the contractual agreement would prevent the employer from receiving an arbitral resolution of the dispute at issue." Pet. at 16. Acceptance of this argument would not change the result here. The Union's inaccurate characterization of the "crux of this dispute" ("whether the negotiations which culminated on April 23 had the effect of modifying the 1984-1987 Agreement" pursuant to Article 32 of the 1984 Master Agreement, Pet. at 11) and its disingenuous description of its grievance ("raising precisely this issue," Pet. at 11) notwithstanding,[12] the Union's grievance did not address the

---

11. This distinction also applies to the Union's example regarding a grievance over the discharge of an employee. Pet. at 17. The grievance over the discharge is a union claim, and the employer would be obligated to arbitrate that claim. The employer in the Union's example, unlike Mack in the present case, would have no claim to bring to court. Here, however, the district court found, and the Court of Appeals affirmed, that the Union had repudiated the 1987 Master Agreement. Mack instituted its action to remedy the Union's repudiation.

12. At no point in its petition does the Union quote the entire grievance that it claims bars Mack from commencing this action. Instead, the Union merely characterizes the grievance in conclusory fashion as presenting the same issue litigated in the district court by Mack. As found by the Third Circuit, this is not accurate. The full text of the grievance is set forth herein in the Counterstatement of the Case at p. 7, *supra*.

issue in this action.[13]

The issue presented to the district court by Mack's complaint was whether the parties had entered into a valid new agreement. As the Third Circuit held, the Union's grievance did not raise the issue of whether Article 32 was followed, or whether a new agreement existed. App. at 21a. Instead, the grievance protested the alleged partial implementation of changes under the 1987 Master Agreement which, the Union claimed, did not reflect the understanding of the parties. The remedy requested also indicates that the Union, contrary to its statements in the Petition, did not contend in the grievance that the 1984 Master Agreement was still in effect; the Union requested only that the parties "*revert* back to the *prior* agreement." (emphasis supplied).

Assuming *arguendo* that the grievance the Union filed did raise the issues Mack presented to the district court, it should be apparent from even a cursory examination of the "employee oriented" grievance procedure that Mack did not

---

Likewise, in its Statement of Facts, the Union quotes only Section 2 of Article 32 of the parties' agreements, and omits Section 1 of that Article. A review of the language of Section 2 shows that it is triggered only by negotiations pursuant to Section 1, *i.e.*, "during the sixty (60) days prior to October 20, 1987 . . . ." The 1987 Master Agreement was not the result of the normal 60-days-before-expiration negotiations, and thus Section 2 of Article 32 is not implicated.

13. The Third Circuit expressly held that the grievance "does not implicate Article 32 of the 1984 agreement." App. at 21a. The Union's arguments regarding Article 32 are mere afterthoughts. In its May 1 draft of the Crystal City agreement, the Union stated: "Notwithstanding Article 32 of the Master Shop, Office and Engineering Agreements, the New Agreement will have an effective date of 12:01 a.m., May 4, 1987." The Union also fails to discuss the finding of the lower courts that "[t]he UAW first raised Article 32 as a bar to the new agreement's enforceability in a letter to Mack dated July 6, 1987 — four days after the UAW had filed its grievance." App. at 21a n.12.

have a forum procedurally adequate to deal with its claim. The inadequacy of the contractual procedure is shown by elements of the Union's unilateral access more subtle than the decision to file a grievance. The wording of the grievance, the issues presented by the grievance, the timely prosecution of the grievance, and the decision of whether to submit the grievance to arbitration all lie within the sole discretion of the Union. There is simply no provision in the grievance and arbitration procedure which ensures Mack that its claim will reach the ears of an arbitrator.[14] Without the district court as a forum, Mack would have been committed to millions of dollars in expenditures by virtue of the 1987 agreement with no mechanism for obtaining a declaration that the UAW was committed to do its part.[15]

The Third Circuit held that "[t]he district court could not have been deprived of jurisdiction purely on the basis of a grievance procedure aimed at resolving employee grievances. As a result, the UAW's argument that Mack should 'exhaust contractual remedies' before bringing an action under § 301 is meritless." App. at 21a-22a. This holding is consistent with the precedent of this Court, the authority of every court of appeals which has decided the question, and common sense. The petition therefore should be denied.

---

14. Despite its insistence on arbitration as a satisfactory forum, the UAW has never stated that arbitration of its grievance was imminent or that the relief Mack could obtain through arbitration would be an adequate remedy.

15. The district court found that Mack had acted in reliance on the new agreement by participating in the Stark Arbitration and by making substantial capital expenditures to continue operating its Hagerstown and Macungie plants during the term of the agreements. App. at 38a (Finding 25).

II. PETITIONER'S CHALLENGE TO THE DECISION OF THE THIRD CIRCUIT DOES NOT RAISE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS WARRANTING GRANT OF THE PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI

The Union asserts that it was error for the court of appeals to uphold (1) a finding that the parties entered into a new collective bargaining agreement despite the concurrent finding that was no meeting of the minds on the issue of eligibility for step increases in pension benefits, and (2) an "intrusion" by the district court into the bargaining process. In an effort to cloak issues of fact decided by the district court as legal issues suitable for review by this Court, the Union contends that the court below ignored certain "bedrock principals" [sic] of federal labor policy and created an irreconcilable conflict with prior decisions of the National Labor Relations Board and this Court. Pet. at 18, 19. This position is untenable.

A. The Issue Of Eligibility for Step Increases In Pension Benefits Is An Issue Of Fact And Not Appropriate For The Grant Of A Writ Of Certiorari

The Union's selective representation as to the content of the lower courts' decisions is a disingenuous attempt to create a case suitable for consideration by this Court. The Union argues that it was error for the court of appeals to affirm the finding of the district court that a new Master Agreement had been entered into "despite its finding that no 'meeting of the minds' has been reached regarding eligibility for certain step increases in pension benefits." Pet. at 18.

In its attempt to manufacture an issue suited for the grant of a writ of certiorari, the Union omits the fact that the district court found the issue of eligibility for step

increases in pension benefits to be so insignificant to the parties that it was not discussed at all during the negotiations at Crystal City. "*This issue seems to have been passed over at Crystal City and therefore* no meeting of the minds was reached with respect to it." App. at 46a (emphasis supplied). Because this issue did not become disputed until the trial, the district court found correctly that this issue was not a " 'material' 'essential' or 'operative' term of the agreement." App. at 46a. The Third Circuit did not disturb this factual finding. App. at 27a-28a.

The question of what is a "material" subject is one to be resolved on the basis of the facts of each individual case. *Basic Inc. v. Levinson,* — U.S. —, —, 108 S. Ct. 978, 985 (1988); *Ford v. First Municipal Leasing Corp.,* 838 F.2d 994, 997 (8th Cir. 1988). The district court premised its finding that the parties had entered into a valid agreement on the fact that the parties chose not to address the issue of eligibility for step increases in pension benefits.

In its petition before this Court, the Union overlooks the fact that this subject was not raised by the parties throughout the negotiations up to and beyond Crystal City, where the bargain was struck. By insisting that the parties address and reach agreement on a subject that they chose not to address, the Union has itself disregarded certain "bedrock principles" of labor law. It is the teaching of this Court that a collective bargaining agreement need not contain provisions which regulate every single aspect of the relationship between the parties. *United Steelworkers of America v. Warrior & Gulf Navigation Co.,* 363 U.S. 574, 579 (1960).[15] Where the parties do not make a new contract

16. In *United Steelworkers of America v. Warrior & Gulf Navigation Co.,* the Court stated: "[t]here are too many people, too many problems, too many unforeseeable contingencies to make the words of the contract the exclusive source of rights and duties. One cannot reduce all the rules governing a community like an industrial plant to fifteen or even fifty pages." 363 U.S. at 579 (Quoting Cox, *Reflections Upon Labor Arbitration,* 71 Harv. L. Rev. 1482, 1498-99 (1959)).

contingent upon the resolution of a specific issue, then they can enter into a collective bargaining agreement with an open—or unresolved—term. *Georgia Kraft Co., Woodkraft Division v. N.L.R.B.*, 696 F.2d 931, 937 (11th Cir.), *reh'g denied*, 704 F.2d 1253 (11th Cir.), *cert. granted*, 464 U.S. 981 (1983), *vacated in part on other grounds*, 466 U.S. 901 (1984); *see Bobbie Brooks, Inc. v. International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union*, 835 F.2d 1164, 1168-69 (6th Cir. 1987) (collective bargaining agreement was not made explicitly subject to issue of non-union production); *Roadway Express, Inc. v. General Teamsters Union, Local 249*, 330 F.2d 859, 864 (3d Cir. 1964) (fact that parties did not discuss helper issue did not compel conclusion that valid contract did not exist).

While a collective bargaining agreement must address certain subjects, step increases in pension benefits is not such a subject in this agreement. Accordingly, the court of appeals correctly affirmed the district court's finding "that this provision [was] not a 'material' 'essential' or 'operative' term of the agreement." App. at 46a; 27a-28a. Certainly, review of the materiality of this term as a matter of fact is not an issue appropriate for review in this Court.

B. The District Court's Finding Of A Meeting Of The Minds Between The Parties Is An Issue Of Fact And Not Appropriate For The Grant Of A Writ Of Certiorari

Underlying the Union's criticism of the district court's conduct of the last day of trial is the Union's exception to the district court's finding that the parties reached a meeting of the minds on a new master agreement on April 23, 1987. There was ample basis for that court's finding that there was a meeting of the minds between the parties, as it was premised, in part, on a series of objective manifestations by the Union of its intention to be bound by the new agreement and to have Mack bound by the new agreement.

The Union has never disputed the occurrence of any of these objective manifestations. The parties negotiated at Crystal City with the object of reaching an enforceable agreement. They shook hands on April 23, 1987, congratulated each other on reaching a new agreement and discussed upcoming ratification plans before leaving Crystal City. As both the court of appeals and the district court found, such conduct generally signifies the culmination of an agreement. App. at 26a; 33a (Finding 9). *See Bobbie Brooks, Inc. v. International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union,* 835 F.2d at 1169.

The 1987 Master Agreement was ratified by an overwhelming majority of the Union membership. Only final agreements are submitted for ratification.[17] After ratification, there was, as cited by both lower courts, "a compelling sign of accord" at the press conference, where Governor Casey, along with representatives of both the UAW and Mack publicly announced the formation of a new agreement. App. at 26a; 36a (Finding 20). On May 5, 1987, when the parties appeared before Arbitrator Stark pursuant to the new agreement's Winnsboro carve out, the UAW Associate General Counsel informed the Arbitrator that the parties had entered into a new five and one half agreement, and this fact was included in the Stark Award. T-1, Oct. 2 at 16; A-741.

Finally, in his opening statement at the trial of this lawsuit, counsel for the UAW stated to the district court, "I would not sit in this courtroom and tell your Honor that there were no negotiations in April, 1987, or there was not

---

17. *See NLRB v. Deauville Hotel,* 751 F.2d 1562, 1569 n.10 (11th Cir. 1985) (union members' ratification of agreement was last act necessary to create a meeting of the minds and an enforceable agreement). *Accord Warehousemen's Union Local No. 206 v. Continental Can Co., Inc.,* 821 F.2d 1348, 1350 (9th Cir. 1987).

an agreement reached between the parties in Crystal City . . . ." T-1, Sept. 30 at 45. Thus, there was ample evidence from which the district court could find that there was an agreement, a finding not worthy of review by this Court.

The Union's description of the proceedings before the district court is also misleading. The district court did not "cajole" the parties into resolving substantive disputes which remained outstanding at the commencement of the hearing. Rather, the court sought to eliminate problems of contract language which had previously gone unresolved due to the Union's bad faith, upon the issuance of the Stark Award, in refusing to continue the process of reducing the new agreement to writing. As the actions of the district court constituted efforts to resolve language disputes, they do not detract from that court's finding that a binding agreement had been reached.[18]

The Union's reliance upon *Interprint Co.*, 273 N.L.R.B. 1863 (1985) in support of its argument that the conduct of the district judge was improper, is misplaced. In *Interprint*, the proposed contract at issue was the first one between the parties and contained neither a commencement nor termination date. 273 N.L.R.B. at 186. The Administrative Law Judge in *Interprint* supplied the missing commencement and termination dates and added terms to the agreement "which he surmised the parties would have agreed to." *Id.* at 1863-64.

Unlike the Administrative Law Judge in *Interprint*, the district court carefully ascertained the terms to which

---

18. Where parties reach agreement on all of the material terms of a collective bargaining agreement, their subsequent disagreement as to all of the details does not negate the existence of that agreement. *Washington Heights-West Harlem-Inwood Health Council, Inc. v. District 1199, National Union of Hospital & Health Care Employees, AFL-CIO*, 748 F.2d 105, 108 (2d Cir. 1984).

Mack and the UAW had previously agreed.[19] The efforts of the district court to resolve language disputes relating to the 1987 Master Agreement were not improper and do not detract from the district court's finding that the parties reached an agreement.[20]

In short, the district court's factual findings were amply supported by the record, were properly affirmed by the court of appeals, and do not merit further review in this Court.

---

19. Indeed, while the Union contends that the court erred in finding a meeting of the minds, it does not contend that any of the terms found by the district court were not, in fact, part of the contract to which the parties agreed.

Some of the disputes which arose between Mack and the Union subsequent to Crystal City resulted from attempts to modify the new agreement. These attempts to modify the agreement are not inconsistent with the existence of the new agreement. *Granite State Distributors, Inc.*, 266 N.L.R.B. 457, 461 (1983). Thus, contrary to the Union's position set forth in its petition, National Labor Relations Board precedent actually supports the finding of the district court.

20. Both the district court and the court of appeals properly looked to federal labor relations law, not state contract law, in determining that the parties reached an agreement. *See Allis-Chalmers Corp. v. Lueck*, 471 U.S. 202, 211 (1985); *Textile Workers Union v. Lincoln Mills of Alabama*, 353 U.S. 448, 451 (1957). To establish a labor agreement under federal labor relations law, the parties must establish a meeting of the minds and demonstrate that they agreed on the substantive terms and conditions of the contract. *Bobbie Brooks, Inc. v. International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union*, 835 F.2d at 1168; *NLRB v. New York-Keansburg-Long Branch Bus Co., Inc.*, 578 F.2d 472, 477 (3d Cir. 1978). Moreover, the technical rules of contract law do not determine the existence of an agreement in the field of labor relations. *See John Wiley & Sons, Inc. v. Livingston*, 376 U.S. 543, 550 (1964); *Bobbie Brooks, Inc. v. International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union*, 835 F.2d at 1168; *Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. v. NLRB*, 659 F.2d 87, 89 (8th Cir. 1981).

The adoption of an enforceable labor contract does not depend on a reduction to writing of the parties' intention to be bound. *Bobbie Brooks, Inc.*, 835 F.2d at 1168; *American Federation of Television & Radio Artists, AFL-CIO v. Inner City Broadcasting Corp.*, 748 F.2d 884, 887 (2d Cir. 1984). Rather, courts look to the surrounding circumstances and to the parties' "conduct manifesting an intention to abide by agreed-upon terms." *Bobbie Brooks, Inc. v. International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union*, 835 F.2d at 1168 (citing *NLRB v. Haberman Construction Co.*, 641 F.2d 351, 355-56 (5th Cir. 1981) (en banc)).

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the petition for a writ of certiorari in this case should be denied.

Respectfully submitted,

*CARTER R. BULLER
EDWARD T. ELLIS
JOEL C. SCHOCHET
ELIZABETH P. HARRIS
Montgomery, McCracken,
Walker & Rhoads
Three Parkway, 20th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 563-0650

Attorneys for Respondent,
Mack Trucks, Inc.

*Counsel of Record

APPENDIX

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Opinion of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, dated September 12, 1988 ..... 1a

Opinion of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, dated October 26, 1987 ..... 31a

MACK TRUCKS, INC.

v.

INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA, UAW.

Appeal of INTERNATIONAL UNION, UAW.

No. 87-1650.

United States Court of Appeals, Third Circuit.

Argued April 12, 1988.

Decided Sept. 12, 1988.

Rehearing and Rehearing In Banc Denied Oct. 11, 1988.

William T. Josem, Richard H. Markowitz, Markowitz & Richman, Philadelphia, Pa., Leonard R. Page (argued), Associate Gen. Counsel, Intern. Union, UAW, Detroit, Mich., for appellant.

Carol A. Mager, Carter R. Buller (argued), Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads, Philadelphia, Pa., for appellee.

Before HUTCHINSON, SCIRICA and GARTH, Circuit Judges.

OPINION OF THE COURT

SCIRICA, Circuit Judge.

This appeal requires us to consider the jurisdiction of a federal district court to determine the existence of a collective bargaining agreement. In so doing, we must also examine the relationship between the subject matter jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Board ("the NLRB") and a district court.

Defendant International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, UAW ("UAW") appeals from a district court judgment declaring valid and enforceable a collective bargaining agreement between plaintiff Mack Trucks, Inc., ("Mack") and the UAW. We must address three issues: (1) whether the district court had subject matter jurisdiction under Section 301(a) of the Labor Management Relations Act ("LMRA"), 29 U.S.C. § 185(a) (1982); (2) whether a contractual grievance and arbitration procedure under a previous agreement barred judicial relief; and (3) whether the district court correctly found a meeting of the minds over the terms of the new agreement. For reasons that follow, we hold that the district court had jurisdiction to consider this action, together with the underlying issue of the existence of a collective bargaining agreement. We also hold that the grievance and arbitration procedure did not bar this suit. Finally, we will affirm the court's finding that the parties created a new collective bargaining agreement.

I.

Mack and the UAW were parties to a master collective bargaining agreement, effective from October 30, 1984, to October 20, 1987. This agreement ("the 1984 agreement") governed Mack employees in bargaining units represented by four local unions: Local 677 in Allentown and Macungie, Pennsylvania; Locals 171 and 1247 in Hagerstown, Maryland; and Local 229 in Somerset, New Jersey.

In late 1986, Mack and the local unions covered by the 1984 contract commenced preliminary negotiations on a new agreement. Mack desired wage reductions and guaranteed productivity increases. For its part, the UAW sought greater job security. Based on these general proposals, the parties began bargaining in early 1987 on a new collective bargaining agreement.

One of the most significant issues in the negotiations concerned the proposed closing of Mack's assembly plant 5-C in Allentown. In October, 1985, Mack had informed the UAW of its intention to construct a new assembly facility, the location then undetermined. The company assured the UAW that no existing plant covered by the 1984 agreement would be closed during the life of that contract. In January 1986, Mack announced that the new facility, which was to replace the Allentown assembly plant, would be built in Winnsboro, South Carolina. The Allentown facility was scheduled to close at the end of October, 1987, after the expiration of the 1984 agreement.

On February 25, 1986, the UAW filed a grievance at Allentown Plant 5-C, contenting that the plant closing violated the 1984 agreement. On October 1, 1986, the UAW submitted a second grievance at Plant 5-C, claiming that the UAW had a right to automatic recognition at the Winnsboro plant, that Mack was required to apply the 1984 agreement to Winnsboro, and that the agreement controlled the transfer rights of union employees to the new facility. After both grievances were denied at all steps, the UAW sought arbitration. At the time of the negotiations for a new labor agreement, arbitration of the Allentown/Winnsboro grievances had not yet been scheduled.

In early April, 1987, the parties agreed to hire former United States Secretary of Labor William Usery to mediate their dispute. At Usery's request, representatives of Mack and the UAW met in Crystal City, Virginia, on April 18, 1987. On the night of April 22, after reaching an impasse on the Allentown/Winnsboro disputes, the parties agreed to "carve out" those issues from the new agreement, to proceed to expedited arbitration of the Allentown/Winnsboro grievances on May 5 and 6, 1987, and to accept the arbitration decision as final and binding. Thereafter, Mack and the UAW continued negotiations on the remaining issues. At approximately 7:00 a.m. on April 23, representatives of both

parties concluded the negotiations with what they termed a "handshake" session; that is, they shook hands with each other, with Usery, and his assistant, William Hobgood, and congratulated one another on reaching a new agreement. They also discussed the need to hold a ratification vote of UAW members before May 5, so that the agreement would be in effect by the date of the Allentown/Winnsboro arbitration. That morning, Usery announced to the press that Mack and the UAW had reached a "tentative agreement." Transcript of Hearing at 54-55. Usery included the word "tentative" at the request of William Casstevens, vice-president of the UAW International, because the agreement still required approval by the UAW's Mack Truck Council, which represented local union members governed by the agreement,[1] and ratification by union members.

In order to inform the membership of the new agreement, local union officials prepared and distributed summaries of its relevant terms. On May 3, a majority of the UAW members covered by the 1984 agreement ratified the new agreement. In Allentown, it was ratified by a vote of 1362-303; in Hagerstown, 736-81; and in Somerset, 29-12. Although the employees at the Macungie facility did not vote on ratification of the new agreement, fewer than 100 union members were employed at that plant; therefore, a majority of Mack union employees voted in favor of ratification.

The following day, Pennsylvania Governor Robert P. Casey convened a press conference at Mack's headquarters in Allentown to announce the new agreement. At the press conference, Usery and Kim Blake, president of UAW Local 677, confirmed that the parties had reached a new agreement. On May 5 and 6, Mack and the UAW submitted the

---

1. At noon on April 23, 1987, Casstevens met with the Mack Truck Council, which voted unanimously in favor of Casstevens' recommendation to accept the agreement.

Allentown/Winnsboro grievances to arbitration before Arthur Stark, of the American Arbitration Association.

In the weeks following the ratification vote, the parties exchanged proposed contract language intended to reflect the terms of the agreement reached at Crystal City. They also met several times in order to prepare the agreement's specific language. During this period, Mack began to implement certain provisions of the new agreement, including wage reductions and the special early retirement benefits program. From their meetings with Mack in mid-June, the UAW officials learned of this implementation.

On June 19, Stark issued his award on the Allentown/Winnsboro grievances. He determined that the proposed closing of the Allentown facility did not violate the 1984 agreement and that the UAW was not entitled to automatic recognition at the new plant in Winnsboro. He also decided that under the 1984 agreement, certain employees affected by the closing of the Allentown facility had transfer rights to Winnsboro that superseded the rights of prospective employees hired to work at the new plant. At this point the parties had not completed memorializing the new agreement in a written document.

On July 2, the UAW filed a grievance alleging that Mack had unilaterally implemented modifications to the new agreement.[2] Four days later, the UAW wrote to Mack warning that, barring resolution of outstanding disputes and the execution of a document by July 15, the UAW would declare that there was no new agreement between the par-

---

2. The grievance stated:

The union protests the Company unilaterally implementing changes in the Master and Local current Agreement. On June 8, 1987, the company implemented changes in the current Agreement which only benefited them. The Company implemented changes on June 8, 1987, which did not reflect the understandings which we had reached with the Company.

ties. At the same time, the UAW refused to complete the process of memorializing the agreement in writing. On July 10, the UAW stated in a letter to the company:

> [T]here is not now, nor has there ever been, any agreement with the UAW — Mack Trucks Department to allow you to deviate from the terms and conditions of the October 1984 to October 20, 1987 [Agreements].

App. at 753.

On July 14, 1987, Mack filed suit in district court for a declaratory judgment pursuant to the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 (1982), and § 301(a) of the LMRA. The company asked the court to declare valid and enforceable a new collective bargaining agreement between the parties.[3] At the bench trial, Mack introduced into evidence its exhibit 80, prepared at the request of the district judge, as a summary of the parties' agreement reached on April 23 and of the unresolved disputes over contract language. In open court, the district judge questioned counsel for the parties in order to determine what disagreements remained and to resolve disputes over language. At the trial's conclusion on October 9, 1987, the judge issued an

---

3. Specifically, Mack alleged:

> Mack needs a prompt declaration of the validity and enforceability of the April 23, 1987 Agreement in order to obtain the vital intangible benefit of the labor stability provided for by the April 23, 1987 Agreement and to avoid the substantial economic injury to Mack arising from the International Union's attempt to unilaterally repudiate the agreement.
>
> WHEREFORE, Mack respectfully prays that this Honorable Court enter an Order declaring that the April 23, 1987 Agreement with the International Union constitutes a valid and enforceable collective bargaining agreement, enjoining the International Union from taking any economic or other action inconsistent with the April 23, 1987 Agreement, and granting to Mack such other and further relief as may be deemed appropriate to enforce its rights, including an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

Complaint at 8-9.

order declaring that a new collective bargaining agreement existed and that Mack's Exhibit 80, as modified during the courtroom discussion, represented the new agreement. On October 26, 1987, the court issued an opinion containing findings of fact and conclusions of law. *See* 671 F.Supp. 1027. This appeal by the UAW followed.

II.

As a threshold matter, we must determine whether the district court had subject matter jurisdiction to consider the issues raised in this case. In its opinion, the court concluded that it had jurisdiction pursuant to the Declaratory Judgment Act[4] and § 301(a) of the LMRA. Section 301 provides, in relevant part:

> Suits for violations of contracts between an employer and a labor organization representing employees in an industry affecting commerce . . . may be brought in any district court of the United States having jurisdiction of the parties, without respect to the amount in controversy or without regard to the citizenship of the parties.

29 U.S.C. § 185(a).

The UAW raises two closely related arguments contesting the district court's judgment. First, the UAW contends that Mack's claim involves issues uniquely within the expertise of the NLRB, rather than a contract action within the district court's jurisdiction. Therefore, it maintains, the NLRB's exclusive authority over bargaining conduct preempts the district court from acting. *See San Diego Bldg.*

---

4. The Declaratory Judgment Act has only a procedural effect. Although it enlarges the range of remedies available in federal courts, it does not create subject matter jurisdiction. Thus, a court must find an independent basis for jurisdiction before it can consider a declaratory judgment action. *See Federal Kemper Ins. Co. v. Rauscher,* 807 F.2d 345, 351-52 (3d Cir.1986).

Trades Council v. Garmon, 359 U.S. 236, 244, 245, 79 S.Ct. 773, 779, 780, 3 L.Ed.2d 775 (1959). Second, it argues § 301(a) cannot confer jurisdiction on the district court because it authorizes courts to adjudicate only disputes over alleged violations of a collective bargaining agreement, not controversies over the actual existence of a contract.

In response, Mack contents that its claim is a straightforward contract action, which is broader than the type of matter generally preempted in favor of the NLRB. Alternatively, it maintains that because the UAW violated the new agreement by repudiation,[5] the district court properly held that it had jurisdiction over the claim. Alleging a contractual breach, Mack argues, is not a condition precedent to the court's jurisdiction under § 301(a) to decide whether a contract existed. Finally, Mack contends that even if its contract violation claim might also constitute an unfair labor practice within the NLRB's domain, the court and the NLRB possess concurrent, jurisdiction to decide the case. *See Smith v. Evening News Ass'n,* 371 U.S. 195, 197, 83 S.Ct. 267, 268, 9 L.Ed.2d 246 (1977).

Because this appeal involves a question of law, we exercise plenary review. *See Medical Fund—Philadelphia Geriatric Center v. Heckler,* 804 F.2d 33, 36 (3d Cir.1986).

A.

In order to resolve this dispute, we first must examine the interplay between the jurisdiction of the NLRB and of the federal district courts in labor cases. Under the preemption doctrine in labor law, state and federal courts must defer to the primary jurisdiction of the NLRB if a matter is arguably subject to section 7 or section 8 of the National

---

5. Mack alleged in its complaint that the UAW attempted to repudiate the new agreement. The district court specifically found a breach by repudiation.

Labor Relations Act ("NLRA"), 29 U.S.C. §§151-169 (1982).[6] *Garmon,* 359 U.S. at 244, 245, 79 S.Ct. at 779, 780; *see also Longshoremen v. Davis,* 476 U.S. 380, 381, 389-90, 106 S.Ct. 1904, 1907, 1911-12, 90 L.Ed.2d 389 (1986). A primary reason for the preemption doctrine is "the need to avoid conflicting rules of substantive law in the labor relations area and the desirability of leaving the development of such rules to the administrative agency created by Congress for that purpose. . . ." *Vaca v. Sipes,* 386 U.S. 171, 180-81, 87 S.Ct. 903, 912, 17 L.Ed.2d 842 (1967). The doctrine reflects the congressional intent that matters of national labor policy be decided in the first instance by the NLRB. *See Garmon,* 359 U.S. at 244-45, 79 S.Ct. at 779-80; *see also Longshoremen v. Davis,* 476 U.S. at 391, 106 S.Ct. at 1912.

This policy is especially important where Congress has granted the NLRB initial authority to decide issues such as representation, bargaining units, *see International Brotherhood of Elec. Workers, Local 532 v. Brink Const. Co.,* 825 F.2d 207, 211 (9th Cir.1987), a party's status as an "employee" within the meaning of the NLRA, *see Iron Workers v. Perko,* 373 U.S. 701, 706, 83 S.Ct. 1429, 1431, 10 L.Ed.2d 646 (1963), or union governance of its membership, *see Plumbers & Pipefitters v. Plumbers & Pipefitters,* 452 U.S. 615, 626, 101 S.Ct. 2546, 2552, 69 L.Ed.2d 280 (1981). *See generally* American Bar Association, *The Developing Labor Law* 377-78 (2d ed., 3d supp. 1988) (listing areas of the NLRB's exclusive and primary jurisdiction). Those issues involve "considerations . . . largely of a kind most wisely entrusted initially to the agency charged with the day-to-day administration of the Act as a whole." *Marine Engineers v. Interlake Steamship Co.,* 370 U.S. 173, 180, 82 S.Ct. 1237, 1241, 8 L.Ed.2d 418 (1962).

---

6. Section 7 of the NLRA regulates the right of employees to organize and to engage in collective bargaining. 29 U.S.C. §157. Section 8 prohibits employers and unions from committing unfair labor practices, which are defined in that provision. 29 U.S.C. §158.

Nevertheless, the preemption doctrine "has never been rigidly applied to cases where it could not fairly be inferred that Congress intended exclusive jurisdiction to lie with the NLRB." *Vaca,* 386 U.S. at 179, 87 S.Ct. at 911. In §301 of the LMRA, Congress "carved out" an exception to the NLRB's exclusive jurisdiction, by granting district courts jurisdiction over suits for violations of contracts between an employer and a labor organization representing employees in an industry affecting commerce. *Id.* The NLRB's primary jurisdiction does not preempt a court's jurisdiction over §301 actions, even if the matter is arguably subject to §7 or §8 of the NLRA. In *Smith,* 371 U.S. at 197, 83 S.Ct. at 268, the Supreme Court held:

> The authority of the Board to deal with an unfair labor practice which also violates a collective bargaining contract is not displaced by §301, but it is not exclusive and does not destroy the jurisdiction of the courts in suits under §301.

Id.; see also Farmer v. Carpenters Local 25, 430 U.S. 290, 297 n. 8, 97 S.Ct. 1056, 1062 n. 8, 51 L.Ed.2d 338 (1977) (§301 is a congressional exception to NLRB's exclusive jurisdiction under *Garmon*); *William E. Arnold Co. v. Carpenters Dist. Council,* 417 U.S. 12, 16, 94 S.Ct. 2069, 2072, 40 L.Ed.2d 620 (1974) ("[T]he *Garmon* doctrine is not relevant to actions within the purview of §301. . . .") (citations omitted).

Thus, a district court retains independent jurisdiction to decide a case properly brought under §301, even if the claim may also constitute an unfair labor practice under the NLRA. "The strong policy favoring judicial enforcement of collective-bargaining contracts was sufficiently powerful to sustain the jurisdiction of the district courts over enforcement suits even though the conduct involved was arguably or would amount to an unfair labor practice within the jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Board." *Hines v. Anchor Motor Freight,* 424 U.S. 554, 563, 96 S.Ct. 1048, 1055, 47 L.Ed.2d 231 (1976); *see also Motor Coach Employees v. Lockridge,* 403 U.S. 274, 300, 91 S.Ct. 1909, 1924, 29

L.Ed.2d 473 (1971). In *Smith,* for example, when a clause of a collective bargaining agreement specifically prohibited discrimination against union members, the fact that an action for breach of contract based on that provision could also constitute an unfair labor practice claim under §8(a)(3) of the NLRA, 29 U.S.C. §158(a)(3), did not destroy the court's jurisdiction over the contract suit. 371 U.S. at 200-01, 83 S.Ct. at 270. In such a case, the NLRB and the court possess concurrent jurisdiction. *See id.* at 197, 83 S.Ct. at 268; *see also NLRB v. Strong,* 393 U.S. 357, 360, 89 S.Ct. 541, 544, 21 L.Ed.2d 546 (1969).

B.

A labor case, therefore, can be within the concurrent jurisdiction of the NLRB and the federal courts, but it is within the NLRB's exclusive jurisdiction only if it involves an unfair labor practice that is not also covered by §301(a). Thus, the NLRB's jurisdiction is "exclusive" only if there is no jurisdiction under §301(a). On the other hand, a case is governed solely by §301(a) only if it is not also an unfair labor practice. Under each jurisdictional scenario, the applicability of §301(a) controls our inquiry.

The UAW, however, contends that we need not reach the §301(a) issue in this case because Mack's suit is solely an NLRB matter, *i.e.,* not a contract claim, and is therefore within the NLRB's exclusive jurisdiction. *See* American Bar Association, *The Developing Labor Law* 377 (2d ed., 3d supp. 1988) ("Courts have recognized exclusive or primary Board jurisdiction in suits involving primarily representational matters and matters which are unfair labor practices under the Act as distinct from contractual issues."); *accord Local 3-193 Intern. Woodworkers v. Ketchikan Pulp Co.,* 611 F.2d 1295, 1299 (9th Cir.1980) (union attempted end run around the NLRB by characterizing its representation and bargaining unit claim as a contract action under §301).

The UAW relies on the general proposition that the NLRB has authority to oversee and referee the process of collective bargaining. *See H.K. Porter Co. v. NLRB,* 397 U.S. 99, 107-08, 90 S.Ct. 821, 825-26, 25 L.Ed.2d 146 (1970). Further, it contends that Mack's claim implicates the NLRA's duty to bargain collectively, and in good faith, *see* §§158(a)(3), (a)(5), and the duty to reduce the terms of an oral contract to writing, *see* §158(d).

We disagree. First, as we have noted, we cannot resolve the UAW's claim that Mack's suit is exclusively a NLRB matter without also determining that the suit is not a §301(a) action. Thus, by adopting the UAW's exclusivity argument, our holding would necessarily reject Mack's claim that we have jurisdiction under §301(a) to determine the existence of a contract. If, however, we hold that §301(a) does cover Mack's suit, the *Garmon* preemption doctrine would not apply, and — even assuming Mack's claim also alleges an unfair labor practice — the NLRB and the court would possess concurrent jurisdiction. *See Smith,* 371 U.S. at 197, 83 S.Ct. at 268.

Therefore, the NLRB's authority to supervise the collective bargaining process does not by itself preempt a federal court's jurisdiction to decide a §301 contract dispute. Indeed, the NLRB has declined to exercise its concurrent jurisdiction over unfair labor practice questions when federal labor policy would best be served by judicial treatment. *See id.* at 198 n. 6, 83 S.Ct. at 269 n. 6; *accord William E. Arnold Co.,* 417 U.S. at 18, 94 S.Ct. at 2073 (1974) ("The Board's practice and policy of declining to exercise its concurrent jurisdiction over arguably unfair labor practices which also violate provisions of collective-bargaining agreements for voluntary adjustment of disputes highlight the congressional purpose that §301 suits in state and federal courts should be the primary means for 'promoting collective bargaining that [ends] with agreements not to strike.' ") (quoting *Lincoln Mills,* 353 U.S. at 453, 77 S.Ct. at 916).

Second, we do not find that Mack's suit turns solely on violations of good faith bargaining, or the duty to execute an agreement, *see* §§158(a)(3), (5), (d), which would trigger the NLRB's exclusive jurisdiction. Mack's complaint does not request that the union be ordered to execute an agreement. *Compare NLRB v. New York-Keansburg-Long Branch Bus Co.*, 578 F.2d 472, 474, 479 (3d Cir.1978) (union filed unfair labor practice charge alleging that employer had refused to sign an agreement that had been reduced to writing). Nor did Mack claim that the UAW negotiated in bad faith or failed to bargain. Rather, Mack seeks to enforce the validity of a contract. Although this claim may raise some unfair labor practice issues,[7] we must first determine whether §301(a) grants federal courts jurisdiction to determine the existence of a collective bargaining agreement. If it does, our inquiry is complete because even if NLRB issues are implicated, the concurrent jurisdiction doctrine vests the district court with jurisdiction.

C.

In construing §301(a), our starting point is the language of the statute. The precise meaning of "suits for violation of contracts" in §301(a) is unclear, and Congress did not define it in the LMRA. The phrase could assume the existence of a valid labor agreement, and refer only to suits for a breach of a specific contractual provision, or it could grant jurisdiction to resolve a dispute over whether the parties' conduct constituted the formation of a contract. That, of course, is the issue presented in this appeal.

Because the statutory provision is not free from ambiguity, we intrepret §301(a) in light of its legislative history,

---

7. To establish that the conduct at issue was "arguably" subject to the NLRA, the party asserting preemption based on the NLRB's exclusive jurisdiction "must advance an interpretation of the Act that is not plainly contrary to its language and that has not been 'authoritatively rejected' by the courts or the Board." *Longshoremen v. Davis*, 476 U.S. at 395, 106 S.Ct. at 1914.

congressional intent, and underlying policies. *See Northern R.R. Co. v. Oklahoma Tax Comm'n,* 481 U.S. 454, 107 S.Ct. 1855, 1859-60, 95 L.Ed.2d 404 (1987) ("Legislative history can be a legitimate guide to a statutory purpose obscured by ambiguity."); *Offshore Logistics, Inc. v. Tallentire,* 477 U.S. 207, 220-22, 106 S.Ct. 2485, 2494, 91 L.Ed.2d 174 (1986); *cf. Complete Auto Transit, Inc. v. Reis,* 451 U.S. 401, 406, 101 S.Ct. 1836, 1840, 68 L.Ed.2d 248 (1981) ("[I]t is clear that in fashioning federal [substantive] law under §301(a) substantial deference should be paid to revealed congressional intention.") (citing *Atkinson v. Sinclair Refining Co.,* 370 U.S. 238, 248-49, 82 S.Ct. 1318, 1324-25, 8 L.Ed.2d 462 (1962)).

During the past three decades, the Supreme Court has thoroughly canvassed the policies and history underlying enactment of §301(a). Although this legislative history has been described as "somewhat cloudy and confusing," *Textile Workers v. Lincoln Mills,* 353 U.S. 448, 452, 77 S.Ct. 912, 915, 1 L.Ed.2d 972 (1957), we believe Congress offered "a few shafts of light that illuminate our problem." *Id.*

First, Congress enacted §301 to expand, not limit, the availability of forums for the enforcement of contracts made by labor organizations. *Dowd Bax Co. v. Courtney,* 368 U.S. 502, 508-09, 82 S.Ct. 519, 523, 7 L.Ed.2d 483 (1962). Until passage of §301, enforcement of labor agreements had been a task handled by state courts, *William E. Arnold Co.,* 417 U.S. at 20, 94 S.Ct. at 2074, even though many states had made "suits against labor organizations difficult or impossible." *Dowd Box Co.,* 368 U.S. at 510, 82 S.Ct. at 524. Passage of the Act "represented a far-reaching and many-faceted legislative effort to promote the achievement of industrial peace through encouragement and refinement of the collective bargaining process." *Id.* at 509, 82 S.Ct. at 523. Critical to this goal was Congress' recognition in §301 "of the vital importance of assuring the enforceability of such agreements" in the courts. *Id.*

Second, we find it instructive that the legislation originally proposed in Congress would have made the violation of a collective bargaining agreement an unfair labor practice, subject to NLRB jurisdiction, and also made it a §301 contract violation, subject to federal court jurisdiction. *Id.* at 510-11, 82 S.Ct. at 524-25; *accord Lincoln Mills,* 353 U.S. at 452, 77 S.Ct. at 915. "In conference, however, it was decided to make collective bargaining agreements enforceable only in the courts." *Dowd Box Co.,* 368 U.S. at 511, 82 S.Ct. at 524. Congress intended that collective bargaining contracts should be enforceable, and that an aggrieved party should "have a right of action in Federal courts." *Lincoln Mills,* 353 U.S. at 453, 77 S.Ct. at 916. Congress noted:

> Once parties have made a collective bargaining contract, the enforcement of that contract should be left to the usual processes of the law and not to the National Labor Relations Board.

H.R.Conf.Rep. No. 510, 80th Cong., 1st Sess. 42 (1947), U.S.Code Cong.Serv. 1947, pp. 1135, 1147; *see also Plumbers & Pipefitters,* 452 U.S. at 626, 101 S.Ct. at 2552; *Dowd Box Co.,* 368 U.S. at 511, 82 S.Ct. at 524; *Lincoln Mills,* 353 U.S. at 452-53, 77 S.Ct. at 915-16. In addition, Congress made clear that

> [section 301] contemplates not only the ordinary lawsuits for damages but also such other remedial proceedings, both legal and equitable, as might be appropriate in the circumstances; in other words, proceedings could, for example, be brought by the employers . . . under the Declaratory Judgments Act in order to secure declarations from the Court of legal rights under the contract.

93 Cong.Rec. 3656 (1947) (statement of Rep. Barden), *quoted in Lincoln Mills,* 353 U.S. at 456, 77 S.Ct. at 917.[8] Thus,

---

8. Rep. Hartley, a co-sponsor of the bill, confirmed this interpretation. 93 Cong.Rec. 3657 (1947) (statement of Rep. Hartley), *quoted in Lincoln Mills,* 353 U.S. at 456, 77 S.Ct. at 917.

Congress designated the judiciary as the body charged with "assuring the enforceability of such agreements." *See Dowd Box Co.*, 368 U.S. at 509, 82 S.Ct. at 523.

We have considered whether these legislative pronouncements might presume the existence of a valid agreement and thereby contemplate §301 jurisdiction only when the parties agree that a contract exists. This view, however, ignores Congress' broader concern that the courts — as opposed to the NLRB — be granted authority to decide disputes of a contractual nature. When, as here, a party seeks enforcement of a labor agreement, and the other party denies the contract's existence, the filing party's declaratory judgment action constitutes an "enforcement" action. Congress intended that contractual disputes be resolved by courts applying "usual processes of the law." H.R.Rep. 510 at 42, U.S.Code Cong.Serv. 1947, at 1147. These principles of law apply equally to cases involving breach of an acknowledged contract and those involving a dispute over the agreement's existence.

Moreover, by declining to classify contract violations as an unfair labor practice under the Act, Congress determined that contract actions did not necessarily implicate the type of labor issues that mandated initial referral to the specialized expertise of the NLRB. Instead, Congress expressed a preference for judicial, as opposed to agency, resolution of contractual questions, and it recognized a declaratory judgment action as a proper means of obtaining this type of judicial relief.

The Court's decision in *Dowd Box Co.* supports our holding of jurisdiction. In *Dowd Box Co.*, the parties began contract negotiations before expiration of a labor agreement. They then signed a stipulation continuing the existing agreeement and providing for wage increases and changes concerning holidays and vacations. The employer announced that it would honor the stipulation, but a few weeks later changed its mind. The employer contended it had informed

the union during negotiations that the employer's bargaining agents had acted without authority in negotiating the stipulated agreement. The union subsequently filed suit in state court, requesting "a judgment declaring that there existed a valid and binding collective bargaining agreement . . ." 368 U.S. at 504, 82 S.Ct. at 521.[9]

The issue decided by the Supreme Court was whether §301 divested state courts of jurisdiction in contract violation cases and thereby granted federal courts exclusive jurisdiction. *Id.* at 503, 506, 82 S.Ct. at 520, 522. The Court held that a state court could assert jurisdiction over a §301 suit seeking a declaration that a contract existed, as long as it applied federal law. *Id.* at 511, 82 S.Ct. at 524; *accord Teamsters Local, 174 v. Lucas Flour Co.*, 369 U.S. 95, 102, 82 S.Ct. 571, 576, 7 L.Ed.2d 593 (1962) (inconsistent state law must give way to substantive federal labor law). The Court's analysis recognized that a suit seeking a declaration that a contract existed fell within the ambit of §301(a). By addressing whether state courts could also assert jurisdiction in such cases, the Court implicitly recognized that federal courts already possessed the same authority under §301 to entertain declaratory judgment suits over the existence of a bargaining agreement. *See Dowd Box Co.*, 368 U.S. at 511, 82 S.Ct. at 524 ("The clear implication of the entire record of the congressional debates in both 1946 and 1947 is that the purpose of conferring jurisdiction upon federal district courts was not to displace, but to supplement, the thoroughly considered jurisdiction of the courts of the various states over contracts made by labor organizations.").

---

9. Specifically, the union's complaint requested a judgment declaring that there existed a valid and binding collective bargaining agreement, for an order enjoining the company from terminating or violating, and for an accounting and damages.

Dowd Box. Co., 368 U.S. at 504, 82 S.Ct. at 521 (describing averments in the complaint).

We are presented with nearly identical facts in this case. After commencing negotiations before expiration of an existing agreement, the UAW and Mack publicly announced a "tentative agreement" on April 23, 1987, and the UAW members ratified the new agreement. When the UAW later refused to acknowledge the agreement as controlling, Mack filed suit in federal court seeking a declaratory judgment that "the April 23 1987 Agreement with the International Union constitutes a valid and enforceable collective bargaining agreement . . ." *See* Complaint at 24. Mack's request for relief is indistinguishable from the union's claim in *Dowd Box Co. Compare* n. 3, *supra,* (Mack's complaint) *with* n. 9, *supra, (Dowd* complaint).

If, as the UAW contends, §301(a) does not confer jurisdiction to determine the existence of a contract, the Court in *Dowd Box Co.* would have had no occasion to reach the issue whether state courts could also possess jurisdiction in such cases. Moreover, the Court has recently applied the *Dowd Box Co.* analysis in discussing the distinction between the respective roles of the federal courts and the NLRB. In *Plumbers & Pipefitters v. Plumbers & Pipefitters,* 452 U.S. 615, 626, 101 S.Ct. 2546, 2552, 69 L.Ed.2d 280 (1981), the Court recognized the "obvious and substantial difference" between the NLRB's substantive regulation of internal union affairs and the "enforcement by the federal courts of freely entered into agreements . . ." In discussing the issue of federal court jurisdiction, the Court reaffirmed the principle that "*enforcement* of [a collective bargaining agreement] should be left to the usual processes of the law and not to the National Labor Relations Board." *Id.* (emphasis in original) (quoting H.R.Rep. 510 at 42, U.S.Code Cong.Serv. 1947, at 1147; *Teamsters Local, 174 v. Lucas Flour Co.,* 369 U.S. 95, 101 n. 9, 82 S.Ct. at 575 n. 9 (1962) (citing *Dowd Box Co.,* 368 U.S. at 513, 82 S.Ct. at 525)).

Finally, prior decisions of this court do not support the UAW's view that a district court lacks jurisdiction under

§301 to determine the existence of a collective bargaining agreement. In *Leskiw v. Local 1470, International Bhd. of Elec. Workers,* 464 F.2d 721 (3d Cir.), *cert. denied,* 409 U.S. 1041, 93 S.Ct. 526, 34 L.Ed.2d 490 (1972), we held a district court lacked jurisdiction under §301 unless the plaintiff alleges a violation of a collective bargaining agreement. *Id.* at 723. We distinguished between suits for "a violation *of* a collective bargaining agreement" and suits for "an alleged violation *by* a labor contract" of rights that employees already possessed under a pre-agreement " 'contract of hire.' " *Id.* (quoting *Adams v. Budd Co.,* 349 F.2d 368, 369-70 (3d Cir.1965) (emphasis in original)). We held that a party cannot invoke §301 jurisdiction by alleging that the contract itself constituted a violation by conflicting with other pre-existing rights. *Accord Medlin v. Boeing Vertol Co.,* 620 F.2d 957, 962 (3d Cir.1980) (no jurisdiction under §301 because plaintiff's claim was independent of the contract, and did not involve a violation of rights arising under a collective bargaining agreement). In *Leskiw,* we did not address the issue whether §301 grants jurisdiction for courts to decide whether a contract exists.[10]

---

10. We recognize that some courts of appeals have read the language of §301 as barring jurisdiction to address this question, *see, e.g., A.T. Massey Coal Co. v. Int'l Union,* 799 F.2d 142, 146 (4th Cir.1986) *cert. denied.* — U.S. —, 107 S.Ct. 1964, 95 L.Ed.2d 536 (1987); *NDK Corp. v. Local 1550,* 709 F.2d 491, 492-93 (7th Cir.1983); *Hernandez v. Nat'l Packing Co.,* 455 F.2d 1252, 1253 (1st Cir.1972), but we disagree with those holdings.

In *A.T. Massey Coal Co.,* for example, the Fourth Circuit considered a consolidated appeal in which one district court had declined to assert jurisdiction over whether a contract existed in a suit filed by an employer, and another district court asserted jurisdiction under the same facts in a suit filed by the union. The court held that under §301 a district court had no jurisdiction to consider an employer's claim that it was not bound by an agreement because no contract existed. The court then concluded, however, that the second district court had §301 jurisdiction to consider the union's claim that the employer was bound by the same agreement. 799 F.2d at 146. This view fails to articulate a legal basis to justify jurisdiction in the union case, but not in the employer's case.

Accordingly, we conclude that §301(a) confers jurisdiction on a district court to determine the existence of a collective bargaining agreement.

III.

The UAW also maintains that notwithstanding subject matter jurisdiction under §301, the district court is barred from deciding this case because the same dispute is pending under the mandatory grievance procedure in the 1984 agreement, which the UAW invoked when it filed a grievance on July 2, 1987. Thus, the UAW contends that Mack has failed to exhaust its contractual remedies.

Under Article 32, section 2 of the 1984 agreement, negotiations for modification or amendment of the agreement are not binding unless those changes have been reduced to writing and signed by designated parties. Article 5 of the 1984 agreement provides for an exclusive grievance procedure for all employee disputes involving contract interpretation. The UAW maintains that its grievance alleges that

---

The Courts of Appeals for the Seventh and First Circuits, meanwhile, merely concluded that the plain language of §301 bars jurisdiction to consider a suit concerning the existence of a collective bargaining agreement. *See NDK Corp.* 709 F.2d at 492-93; *Hernandez,* 455 F.2d at 1253. Other courts have disagreed. *See, e.g., Rozay's Transfer v. Local Freight Drivers, Local 208,* 850 F.2d 1321, 1326 (9th Cir.1988); *McNally Pittsburg, Inc. v. International Ass'n of Bridge, Structural & Ornamental Iron Workers,* 812 F.2d 615, 617-19 (10th Cir.1987); *Board of Trustees v. Universal Enter.,* 751 F.2d 1177, 1184 (11th Cir.1985); *United Steelworkers of Amer. v. Rome Indus., Inc.,* 437 F.2d 881, 882-83 (5th Cir.1970). In *McNally,* for example, the court held that §301 grants a district court jurisdiction to consider whether a labor contract exists because the statute's dual purposes "to promote industrial peace and develop uniform law, demand that the statute be construed broadly." 812 F.2d at 617-19.

Although we agree with those authorities that have upheld jurisdiction in the district court to decide the existence of a labor contract, we prefer to rest our conclusion on the analysis set forth in text, *supra* Part II-C.

Mack unilaterally implemented modifications to the 1984 agreement, in violation of Article 32. Because this grievance awaits arbitration, the UAW contends that Article 5 bars Mack from bringing suit in the district court.

On its face, the UAW's July 2 grievance seems to challenge Mack's implementation of the new agreement.[11] It does not implicate Article 32 of the 1984 agreement,[12] Because Article 32 governs negotiations to modify or amend the 1984 agreement, it does not apply to the negotiations conducted in April, 1987, which were directed only to the creation of a new labor contract. Moreover, the grievance procedure under Article 5 governs employee disputes only, under the interpretation of the 1984 agreement. It does not bear on the existence of a new agreement.

Thus, Article 5 of the 1984 agreement is an employee-oriented grievance procedure and as such, the grievance procedures set forth in that Article apply solely to grievances by union members and not grievances by Mack.[13] The district court could not have been deprived of jurisdiction purely on the basis of a grievance procedure aimed at resolv-

---

11. For the text of this grievance, see *supra* note 2.

12. In a draft submitted to Mack on May 1, 1987, the UAW expressed its understanding of the parties' intent:

> Notwithstanding Article 32 of the Master Shop, Office and Engineering Agreements [*i.e.*, the 1984 agreement], the New Agreement will have an effective date of 12:01 a.m., May 4, 1987 . . .

App. at 1114. The UAW first raised Article 32 as a bar to the new agreement's enforceability in a letter to Mack dated July 6, 1987 — four days after the UAW had filed its grievance. App. at 751.

13. Article 5 provides in relevant part:

> In the event that any employee has a grievance or any group of employees have a grievance, the employee having such grievance or the group having a grievance or a designated member thereof shall, before a written grievance is filed pursuant to Section 2 below, take up the grievance in the following manner: . . .

ing employee grievances. As a result, the UAW's argument that Mack should "exhaust contractual remedies" before bringing an action under §301 is meritless. *See Lehigh Portland Cement Co. v. Cement, Lime, Gypsum & Allied Workers Division,* 849 F.2d 820, 822-23 (3d Cir.1988).

For these reasons, we conclude that the mandatory grievance procedure under the 1984 agreement did not bar this action in federal court.

IV.

After deciding that it had jurisdiction to hear this case, the district court concluded: "A new master collective bargaining agreement exists between Mack and the Union effective May 4, 1987, until November 3, 1992. The terms of this master bargaining agreement are set forth in plaintiff's exhibit 80 as modified by this opinion and by the record in this case." 671 F.Supp. at 1036.[14] We review this deter-

---

14. In its opinion, the district court summarized the essential elements of the agreement as set forth in Mack's exhibit 17, a report prepared on April 24, 1987, by Walter Meck, a Mack official and negotiator, for the members of Mack's Board of Directors:

(a) A five and one-half year term effective immediately following ratification;

(b) A commitment by Mack that during the term of the new master agreement it will not close any existing facilities at which work is being performed by members of the Union (other than the previously announced closing of the Allentown assembly division);

(c) The assignment to Mack's Macungie facility of its complete knockdown operations and the assembly of all of its cab over engines models, its glider kits, and the "Baby 8" model;

(d) No further outsourcing by Mack during the term of the agreement;

(e) The implementation by Mack of its five year capital investment program of $22,000,000 for the Macungie assembly division and $100,000 for the Hagerstown power train division;

mination under a mixed standard. To the extent the district court made factual findings on the terms of the contract, we cannot disturb those findings unless they are clearly erroneous. To the extent the court selected or interpreted legal principles, our review is plenary. *Universal Minerals, Inc. v. C.A. Hughes & Co.*, 669 F.2d 98, 103 (3d Cir.1981).

(f) The company's consent to fund and implement the special early retirement benefits program as defined in the 1984 master agreement, as to all eligible Mack union employees;

(g) The maximum term of health care benefits currently provided to laid off employees to be extended from 13 months to 24 months for Mack's active union employees laid off as a result of the previously announced closing of the Allentown assembly division and the outsourcing of miscellaneous machining and carriers at the Hagerstown power train division;

(h) A reduction of $.85 to $1.10 per hour to be made to the wage rate schedule;

(i) Productivity improvements of up to twenty percent (20%) to be implemented at Macungie, effective on the date of the start up of the "Baby 8" model or January 4, 1988 (whichever is later), and Hagerstown, effective June 8, 1987;

(j) Job security guarantees for members of Local 677's engineering unit and the placement of the proposed centralized computer center in the Lehigh Valley, if constructed during the term of the new master agreement;

(k) The creation of a Protected Employee Group ("PEG") program, replacing the current Mack Income Security ("MIS") Program, with a $33,000,000 "bank" of funds to be used to offset the impact of future events such as improved methods of doing business, new technology and market turndowns exceeding ten percent (10%) of PEG employment levels (such levels to exclude the impact of 5C and other plant closings, Hagerstown outsourcing, productivity improvement improvements, and the higher than normal current employment levels due to the strike bank and current market conditions) [sic];

(l) The grievances concerning employee transfer to Winnsboro and the Union's entitlement to automatic recognition at Winnsboro to be subject to an "accelerated" arbitration process on May 5th and 6th, 1987;

A.

In determining whether a collective bargaining agreement exists, courts must look to federal labor relations law, not state contract law. *See Allis-Chalmers Corp. v. Lueck,* 471 U.S. 202, 211, 105 S.Ct. 1904, 1911, 85 L.Ed.2d 206 (1985); *Lincoln Mills,* 353 U.S. at 451, 77 S.Ct. at 915. In order to reach a labor agreement, the parties must establish a meeting of the minds, *see Bobbie Brooks, Inc. v. International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union,* 835 F.2d 1164, 1168 (6th Cir.1987), and demonstrate that the parties agreed on the substantive terms and conditions of the contract. *New York-Keansburg-Long Branch Bus Co.,* 578 F.2d 472, 477 (3d Cir.1978).

In the field of labor relations, the technical rules of contract law do not determine the existence of an agreement. *See John Wiley & Sons, Inc. v. Livingston,* 376 U.S. 543, 550, 84 S.Ct. 909, 914, 11 L.Ed.2d 898 (1964); *Bobbie Brooks,* 835 F.2d at 1168; *Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. v. NLRB,* 659 F.2d 87, 89 (8th Cir.1981). Adoption of an enforceable labor contract does not depend on the reduction to writing

---

(m) Certain supplemental unemployment benefits claims, currently unfunded, to be funded;

(n) Scheduled pension increases to occur during the term of the new contract;

(o) The scheduling of wage improvements of $.15 per hour effective January 1, 1990, 1991, and 1992;

(p) A health care cost containment pgram to be implemented as quickly as possible;

(q) Group insurance benefits to be improved throughout the term of the contract;

(r) A program of company funded lump sum payments to be established in return for voluntary terminations of employment.

671 F.Supp. at 1029-30. The opinion also listed several revisions to which both parties had agreed. *See id.* at 1035-36.

of the parties' intention to be bound. *Bobbie Brooks,* 835 F.2d at 1168;[15] *American Fed'n of Television & Radio Artists v. Inner City Broadcasting Corp.,* 748 F.2d 884, 887 (2d Cir.1984); *Trustees of Atlantic Iron Workers, Local 387 Pension Fund v. Southern Stress Wire Corp.,* 724 F.2d 1458 at 1459 (11th Cir.1983); *Kaylor v. Crown Zellerbach, Inc.* 643 F.2d 1362, 1367 (9th Cir.1981); *New York-Keansburg-Long Branch Bus Co.,* 578 F.2d at 477. Instead, courts look to the surrounding circumstances and to the parties' "conduct manifesting an intention to abide by agreed-upon terms." *Bobbie Brooks,* 835 F.2d at 1168 (citing *NLRB v. Haberman Constr. Co.,* 641 F.2d 351, 355-56 (5th Cir.1981) (en banc)); *see also Operating Eng'g Pension Trust v. Gilliam,* 737 F.2d 1501, 1504 (9th Cir.1984). The parties' objective intent to create a contract is relevant — not their subjective beliefs. *See Warehouseman's Local No. 206 v. Continental Can Co.,* 821 F.2d 1348, 1350 (9th Cir.1987).

B.

The UAW contends that it never reached an agreement with Mack, and therefore that the district court erred in finding a meeting of the minds. After reviewing the record, we conclude that the court correctly found that the parties entered into a new collective bargaining agreement.

From the time of the conclusion of the Crystal City negotiations, the UAW's conduct demonstrated a meeting of the minds on the new labor agreement. In the early morning of April 23, 1987, Usery and representatives for Mack and the UAW ended the bargaining session with a "handshake meeting," congratulated each other on reaching

---

15. Indeed, in *Bobbie Brooks,* the employer brought a §301 declaratory judgment action to determine whether a collective bargaining agreement existed. *See Bobbie Brooks, Inc. v. International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union,* 835 F.2d 1164 (6th Cir.1987). The Sixth Circuit reached the merits without discussing a potential jurisdictional problem concerning the propriety of district courts hearing such suits under §301.

a new agreeement, and discussed forthcoming ratifaction plans. As the district court found, such conduct generally signifies the culmination of an agreement. *See, e.g., Bobbie Brooks,* 835 F.2d at 1169 (agreeing with district court's reasoning that the "tone and temperament of the parties at the conclusion of the . . . meeting suggested that a binding agreement had been reached . . .").

More significantly, on May 3, 1987, an overwhelming majority of the affected UAW members voted to ratify the new agreement. Union ratification is generally considered to be "the last act necessary . . . to create a meeting of the minds and an enforceable agreement." *NLRB v. Deauville Hotel,* 751 F.2d 1562, 1569 n. 10 (11th Cir.1985); *see also NLRB v. Southern Fla. Hotel,* 751 F.2d 1571, 1581 n. 14 (11th Cir.1985) (parties created an enforceable contract upon rank-and-file ratification, even though document provided it would become valid upon execution).

After ratification, there was a compelling sign of accord at the televised press conference in Allentown on May 4, 1987, where Governor Casey, along with representatives of Mack and the UAW, publicly announced the formation of a new agreement. Officials of the UAW stated unequivocally that they had entered into a new labor agreement with Mack. Tom Natchuras, the International UAW's Regional Director, praised the contract's emphasis on employee participation:

> Here at Mack Truck we have in the agreement a provision for employee involvement and we will work at that very earnestly. We will couple the skills, knowledge, resources of the management personnel along with the skills, knowledge and resources of the men and women in the bargaining unit and together I'm sure that a year or so from now we will look back at this day and say I'll be darned, we really did it.

App. at 1081 (transcript of press conference). Kim Blake, president of UAW Local 677, thanked the International UAW for its involvement in the negotiation process:

> [W]e never lost sight of the fact that we couldn't do it without the International. We missed out on the boat in the January discussions and came up with a better agreement . . . So I think this is the beginning of a new relationship with Mack and the UAW . . .

App. at 1083-84. In response to a reporter's questions, Blake expressed his satisfaction with the terms of the new contract:

> [T]he most complimentary thing that was said to us by Bill Usery who told us this was one of the best, if not the best, labor agreement in the country with regard to the job security and that's got to be the No. 1 issue in any job marketplace.

App. at 1096-97. Thus, the ratification vote, supported by the words and conduct of UAW officials, provide overwhelming evidence that the parties reached a meeting of the minds as of April 23, 1987.

The UAW contends that notwithstanding this evidence, the district court erred in finding that the parties reached an agreement. First, the UAW points out that the court itself recognized that a dispute remained as to "whether certain step increases in pension benefits are to apply to persons who retire after January 1, 1987, or only to those who retire after January 1, 1988." 671 F.Supp. at 1035. The court directed the parties to "negotiate this issue in good faith." *Id.* The UAW contends this holding was internally inconsistent and violated the policies underlying the NLRA.

It is true that, as a general matter, "a contract does not arise if the union and management have not resolved a dispute over a substantive term." *Bobbie Brooks,* 835 F.2d at 1168. In this case, however, the parties never discussed the issue of step increases in pension plans during the negotiations at Crystal City. *See* 671 F.Supp. at 1035. The dispute over that term never arose until trial. Moreover, the district judge found that this provision was not a "material," "essential," or "operative" term of the agreement. *Id.* We have no reason to overturn this factual finding. Where a

new contract is not contingent upon resolution of a specific issue, that issue does not require resolution before a collective bargaining agreement can be formed. *See Georgia Kraft Co., Woodkraft Div. v. NLRB,* 696 F.2d 931, 937 (11th Cir.1983), *vacated in part on other grounds,* 466 U.S. 901, 104 S.Ct. 1673, 80 L.Ed.2d 149 (1984).

The UAW also argues that substantial differences between the parties after the ratification vote prove the absence of agreement. In particular, the UAW cites a document prepared by Mack and submitted to the UAW on June 2, 1987, entitled "Subject Areas of Disagreement." App. at 2000-04. The UAW maintains that this document reveals differences between the parties as to the substantive terms negotiated in Crystal City.

In its opinion, the district court comprehensively addressed these contentions. First, it resolved several minor disputes that did not affect the validity of the new agreement. For example, the parties initially disagreed over the date of observing Martin Luther King's birthday, but at trial they agreed to observe it on the designated national holiday. 671 F.Supp. at 1034 n. 3. In addition, the court retained in the new agreement the UAW's proposed guidelines regarding the quality of worklife. *Id.* at 1035. The court also found that disagreements over other issues did not involve substantive differences, but rather concerned contract language or attempts to modify the new agreement. For example, at trial the parties disagreed over the interpretation of the language governing the funding of Mack's supplemental unemployment benefit plan. The court ordered the parties to resolve that dispute through the grievance and arbitration procedures. More importantly, the court found that the language disputes involving the UAW's greatest concerns—outsourcing and continued production at certain sites—should be resolved in favor of the

UAW. 671 F.Supp. at 1035.[16] The fact that the parties later attempted to modify the terms of the new contract does not mean that they never reached a binding agreement. *See Granite State Distrib., Inc.*, 266 N.L.R.B. 457, 461 (1983) (Subsequent efforts to modify terms are "in no way inconsistent with the existence of the previously arrived-at agreement. It is not unusual for parties to an agreement to discuss its terms, or even to seek modification thereof, after the agreement has been arrived at.").

---

16. Mack has filed a motion under Fed.R.Civ.P. 60(a) to remand to the district court for clarification of the record because of certain inconsistencies between the district court's October 9, 1987 order and its October 26, 1987 opinion. Under Rule 60(a), a court may correct "[c]lerical mistakes in judgments, orders or other parts of the record and errors therein arising from oversight or omission . . ."

In its October 9 order, the court stated that the UAW's exhibit 7, as modified, would govern outsourcing and transfer of work. In its October 26 opinion, however, the court cited Mack's exhibit 23 as controlling. Because these exhibits contain some inconsistencies, the discrepancy between the order and the opinion involves more than a clerical mistake and is therefore outside the scope of Rule 60(a). *See Jones v. Anderson-Tully Co.*, 722 F.2d 211, 212 (5th Cir. 1984); *Gilbreth Int'l Corp. v. Lionel Leisure, Inc.*, 645 F.Supp. 732, 734 (E.D.Pa. 1986) (Rule 60(a) errors "must be mechanical in nature, apparent on the record and not involve an error of substantive judgment."). We therefore will deny Mack's motion.

It may be possible, however, to resolve these discrepancies under Fed.R.Civ.P. 60(b)(1) particularly since the issue raised is collateral to the question whether a new agreement came into existence — an issue that we have resolved on this appeal. The Advisory Committee Note to the 1946 amendment to Rule 60(b) explains that Rule 60(b)(1) permits relief based on the mistake or inadvertence of others, including the court itself. Thus, if either party or both of them so desire, there is nothing to prevent Mack or the UAW from proceeding before the district court under Rule 60(b)(1).

V.

For the foregoing reasons, we hold that the district court had subject jurisdiction to consider this case, and that the grievance and arbitration procedure under the 1984 agreement did not bar Mack's claim. We also hold that the court correctly found that a new collective bargaining agreement existed between the parties. Accordingly, we will affirm the judgment of the district court.

Costs taxed against appellant.

MACK TRUCKS, INC., Plaintiff,

v.

INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA, UAW, Defendant.

Civ. A. No. 87-4379.

United States District Court,
E.D. Pennsylvania.

Oct. 26, 1987.

Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads, Carter R. Buller, Carol A. Mager, John E. Caruso, Maureen M. Rayborn, Philadelphia, Pa., for plaintiff.

Markowitz & Richman, Richard H. Markowitz, Philadelphia, Pa., William T. Josem, Leonard R. Page, of counsel, for defendant International Union, UAW, Detroit, Mich.

OPINION

CAHN, District Judge.

Plaintiff Mack Trucks, Inc. (hereinafter "Mack") brought the instant action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §2201 seeking declaratory relief against the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, UAW (hereinafter "Union"). The matter was heard without a jury. After extensive oral argument I entered a final order. This opinion is filed to explain the rationale for the final order.

I make the following findings of fact and conclusions of law pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P.52.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Mack is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with its principal place of business in Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. Mack manufactures heavy duty trucks and is engaged in an industry affecting interstate commerce.

2. The Union is a labor organization maintaining its principal office at Solidarity House, 8000 East Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, Michigan. Union's members are employees in an industry affecting interstate commerce.

3. Mack and the Union were parties to a master collective bargaining agreement ("the 1984 master agreement"), effective from October 30, 1984, until October 20, 1987. The 1984 master agreement covers Mack employees in bargaining units represented by four local unions: Local 677 in Allentown and Macungie, Pennsylvania; Locals 171 and 1247 in Hagerstown, Maryland; and Local 229 in Somerset, New Jersey.

4. On February 24, 1987, the Union's executive board rejected agreements Mack had negotiated with Locals 677, 171, 1247, and 229. The agreements between Mack and the Local Unions contained provisions for job security for Union employees of Mack.

5. Efforts by Mack and the Union to negotiate a new master collective bargaining agreement to take effect October 20, 1987, continued through April 8, 1987, but failed to materialize as of that date.

6. In early April, 1987, Mack and the Union agreed to mediate their differences with the assistance of W.J. Usery, Jr., a former Secretary of Labor in the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

7. At Mr. Usery's request, representatives of Mack and the Union met in Crystal City, Virginia, from April 18, 1987, to April 23, 1987.

8. On or about April 20, 1987, representatives of Mack presented a modified proposal to the Union.

9. After intensive negotiations, in the early morning hours of April 23, 1987, Mack and the Union reached agreement on the terms of a new master collective bargaining agreement. The agreement between Mack and the Union was oral and culminated with a shaking of hands by the negotiators for each side.

10. On April 24, 1987, Walter Meck, a Mack official and negotiator, on the basis of his participation in the Crystal City negotiations, prepared a letter and summary of the key elements (plaintiff's exhibit 17) of the new master agreement for transmittal by John Curcio, Mack's Chief Executive Officer, to the members of Mack's Board of Directors.

11. The key elements of the new master agreement as set forth in plaintiff's exhibit 17 are as follows:

(a) A five and one-half year term, effective immediately following ratification;

(b) A commitment by Mack that during the term of the new master agreement it will not close any existing facilities at which work is being performed by members of the Union (other than the previously announced closing of the Allentown assembly division);

(c) The assignment to Mack's Macungie facility of its complete knockdown operations and the assembly of all of its cab over engines models, its glider kits, and the "Baby 8" model;

(d) No further outsourcing by Mack during the term of the agreement;

(e) The implementation by Mack of its five year capital investment program of $22,000,000 for the Macungie assembly division and $100,000,000 for the Hagerstown power train division;

(f) The company's consent to fund and implement the special early retirement benefit program as defined in the 1984 master agreement, as to all eligible Mack union employees;

(g) The maximum term of health care benefits currently provided to laid off employees to be extended from 13 months to 24 months for Mack's active union employees laid off as a result of the previously announced closing of the Allentown assembly division and the outsourcing of miscellaneous machining and carriers at the Hagerstown power train division;

(h) A reduction of $.85 to $1.10 per hour to be made to the wage rate schedule;

(i) Productivity improvements of up to twenty percent (20%) to be implemented at Macungie, effective on the date of the start up of the "Baby 8" model or January 4, 1988 (whichever is later), and Hagerstown, effective June 8, 1987;

(j) Job security guarantees for members of Local 677's engineering unit and the placement of the proposed centralized computer center in the Lehigh Valley, if constructed during the term of the new master agreement;

(k) The creation of a Protected Employee Group ("PEG") Program, replacing the current Mack Income Security ("MIS") Program, with a $33,000,000 "bank" of funds to be used to offset the impact of future events such as improved methods of doing business, new technology and market turndowns exceeding ten percent (10%) of PEG employment levels (such levels to exclude the impact of 5C and other plant closings, Hagerstown outsourcing, productivity improvements, and the higher than normal current employment levels due to the strike bank and current market conditions;

(l) The grievances concerning employee transfer to Winnsboro and the Union's entitlement to automatic rec-

ognition at Winnsboro to be subject to an "accelerated" arbitration process on May 5th and 6th, 1987;

(m) Certain supplemental unemployment benefits claims, currently unfunded, to be funded;

(n) Scheduled pension increases to occur during the term of the new contract;

(o) The scheduling of wage improvements of $.15 per hour effective January 1, 1990, 1991, and 1992;

(p) A health care cost containment program to be implemented as quickly as possible;

(q) Group insurance benefits to be improved throughout the term of the contract;

(r) A program of company funded lump sum payments to be established in return for voluntary terminations of employment.

12. With the exception of the items mentioned in the preceding paragraphs and certain additional items set forth in the discussion of legal issues below, in all other significant respects, the provisions of the 1984 master agreement were carried forward into the new master agreement.

13. As of April 23, 1987, all that remained to be done in order to complete the collective bargaining process was to obtain ratification from the union members acting through their locals and to reduce the new master agreement to a written contract.

14. In order to inform the membership of pertinent contract provisions, the local unions, based upon information provided by the Union, prepared written summary sheets of the new provisions. Copies of the summaries were distributed or posted at the Allentown, Macungie, and Hagerstown locations prior to the May 3, 1987, ratification meetings.

15. The summaries (plaintiff's exhibits 22 and 23) are consistent with the key elements of the new master agreement set forth in Finding of Fact No. 11 and contain the specific wage and benefit terms which were agreed upon.

16. A majority vote of Mack's employees covered by the 1984 master agreement was required to ratify the new master agreement.

17. In Allentown, the new master agreement was ratified by a vote of 1362-303.

18. In Hagerstown, the new master agreement was ratified by a vote of 736-81.

19. In Somerset, the new master agreement was ratified by a vote of 29-12.

20. On May 4, 1987, Governor Casey of Pennsylvania convened a press conference to announce the new master agreement. Mr. Usery, the mediator, and a union representative who attended the press conference also confirmed that a new master agreement had been reached. Although the Hagerstown office workers did not vote on ratification of the new master agreement, there were fewer than 100 office employees at Hagerstown and, therefore, a majority of Mack union employees, voted in favor of ratification.

21. The technique Mr. Usery used to secure the agreement between Mack and the Union involved the concept of a "carve out" of a dispute between the parties relating to Mack's new plant at Winnsboro, South Carolina. This concept involved:

(a) An identification by Mr. Usery that the problems relating to automatic recognition of the Union by Mack at the Winnsboro facility were incapable of being negotiated. Nor could the parties negotiate the rights of union employees to transfer employment to the Winnsboro facility from the Allentown, Macungie, and Hagerstown facilities;

(b) Mr. Usery obtained the consent of the parties to carve out of the mediation process the automatic recognition and transfer rights issues;

(c) The parties agreed that those issues would be resolved by a reference to a labor arbitrator with the understanding that the decision of the arbitrator would be final, binding, and not subject to appeal. It was also contemplated that the arbitrator would render a prompt "bench" decision;

(d) With the Winnsboro issues carved out of their dispute, the parties were able to reach agreement on the other issues before them in regard to the new master agreement;

(e) The arbitration was to be held as soon as practicable and pending grievances were to be used to present the issues to the independent arbitrator.

22. On June 19, 1987, the arbitrator issued his award. He held that Mack was not automatically required to recognize the Union at Winnsboro but that laid off or displaced Mack employees had transfer rights to the Winnsboro facility which superseded the rights of any new employees Mack might hire for work at that plant. In his award, the arbitrator observed:

> ". . . Mack and the UAW entered into a 5½ year master contract to replace the existing one. The new contract is to be effective from May 4, 1987, until November 3, 1992."

23. From April 23, 1987, to June 19, 1987, the parties were involved in the process of memorializing their oral agreement in a written document. As of June 19, 1987, the parties had not completed this task.

(a) Following the receipt of the arbitration award, the Union did not act reasonably, properly, or promptly to complete the task of reducing the oral agreement to writing;

(b) Mr. Collins, a Union negotiator, admitted in his testimony that as a result of the Winnsboro arbitration award and problems with the company regarding the imple-

mentation of that award, the Union would not complete the task of drafting the contract language for the agreement reached at Crystal City, Virginia.

24. On July 6, 1987, the Union took the position that no new collective bargaining agreement existed until reduced to writing and that no "meeting of the minds" took place at the mediation held in Crystal City, Virginia.

25. Pursuant to the terms of the new master agreement, Mack:

(a) Participated in the accelerated arbitration of the Winnsboro issues;

(b) Began to implement the provisions referred to in paragraph 11 including making substantial capital expenditures to continue operating the Hagerstown and Macungie facilities during the 5½ year term of the new master agreement.

26. The Union's refusal to complete the process of reducing the new master agreement to writing was designed to exert pressure on Mack in regard to the Winnsboro issues and did not arise from any disagreement as to what had been agreed upon at Crystal City.

DISCUSSION

As a preliminary matter, this court must determine whether it has subject matter jurisdiction over the controversy. The Union contends that it does not, relying primarily on the language of §301(a) of the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §§141-187 (1982), which states that federal district courts shall have jurisdiction over "[s]uits for *violation* of contracts between an employer and a labor organization", 28 U.S.C. §185(a) (1982) (emphasis added). Asserting that no "violation" of the new master agreement has been alleged, and that no breach has in fact occurred, the Union argues that this case falls out-

side of the jurisdictional grant of §301.[1] According to the Union, the essence of Mack's claim is that the Union has failed to reduce an oral collective bargaining agreement to writing. The Union argues that such a refusal, if it occurred, would constitute an unfair labor practice falling within the exclusive jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Board. *See San Diego Bldg. Trades Council v. Garmon*, 359 U.S. 236, 79 S.Ct. 773, 3 L.Ed.2d 775 (1959); 29 U.S.C. §158(b)(3), (d) (1982) (defining unfair labor practices by a union).

The Union's position is unsound for several reasons. First, Mack has satisfactorily established a breach by the Union of the new master agreement.[2] The Union's letters

---

1. The Union cites *Leskiw v. Local 1470, IBEW*, 464 F.2d 721 (3d Cir.1972), *cert. denied*, 409 U.S. 1041, 93 S.Ct. 526, 34 L.Ed.2d 490 (1972), and *Adams v. Budd Co.*, 349 F.2d 368 (3d Cir.1965), to buttress its contention that §301 confers jurisdiction on the federal courts over suits for *violation* of labor contracts. Properly read, however, these cases stand for the proposition that the federal courts have jurisdiction over suits for violation of *labor contracts*. In both *Lewkiw* and *Adams*, the rights alleged to have been violated did not arise out of a "contract between an employer and a labor organization . . . or between any such labor organizations," but arose from a source separate and distinct from any such contract. It was upon this basis that the suits in each of these cases was dismissed for lack of jurisdiction.

It is clear that plaintiffs in both *Leskiw* and *Adams* alleged *violations* of certain rights. None of the rights that they alleged had been violated, however, were based on a labor contract. What is important for §301(a) purposes is that the rights and duties arising from a collective bargaining agreement be at issue, either because it allegedly has been violated or because its existence is controverted. In neither *Adams* or *Leskiw* were the existence or terms of a collective bargaining agreement at issue. On the contrary, the question each of those cases presented was what effect a collective bargaining agreement, the terms and existence of which were undisputed, would have on rights separate from that agreement.

2. Arguably no breach at all is required for §301 jurisdiction. The Circuits are split on the issue of whether a breach is a condition precedent to the bringing of a suit under §301. *Compare United Steelworkers v. Rome Industries, Inc.* 437 F.2d 881 (5th Cir.1970) (allegation of breach

dated July 6 and July 10, 1987, unequivocally express the Union's position that a new collective bargaining agreement had not been reached. I find that this denial constituted a clear breach by repudiation, or an "anticipatory breach," of the new master agreement. *See Restatement (Second) of Contracts* §253 (1979); *see also id.* at comment d (noting availability of declaratory relief in order to "avoid harsh results").

Second, the Union's letters of July 6 and July 10, 1987 charge Mack with violating its obligations to the Union under the old agreement by unilaterally implementing the terms of the new collective bargaining agreement. While it is true that the availability of declaratory relief neither augments or diminishes federal jurisdiction, *Skelly Oil Co. v. Phillips Petroleum Co.*, 339 U.S. 667, 671-72, 70 S.Ct. 876, 879, 94 L.Ed. 1194 (1950), one of the principal goals of the Declaratory Judgment Act is to allow a party, when uncertainty has been injected into a legal relationship, to have an adjudication clarifying its rights "without having to wait until his adversary should decide to bring suit, and to act at his peril in the interim." *Shell Oil Co. v. Frusetta*, 290 F.2d 689, 692 (9th Cir.1961); *see also Berlitz School of Languages of America, Inc. v. Donnelly & Suess, Inc.*, 84 F.Supp. 75, 77 (E.D.Pa.1949). If a breach is essential to federal jurisdiction under §301, a breach by either party is sufficient. *See Todd Shipyards Corp. v. Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers, Local 39*, 344 F.2d 107

---

not necessary) *and Black-Clawson Co. v. International Ass'n of Machinists Lodge 355*, 313 F.2d 179 (2d Cir.1962) (same) *and McNally Pittsburg, Inc. v. International Ass'n of Bridge, Structural & Ornamental Iron Workers*, 812 F.2d 615 (10th Cir.1987) *with NDK Corp. v. United Food and Commercial Workers*, 709 F.2d 491, 97 Lab.Cas. (CCH) ¶10,222 (7th Cir.1983) (no jurisdiction to determine validity of contract absent breach) *and Alvares v. Erickson*, 514 F.2d 156 (9th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 423 U.S. 874, 96 S.Ct. 143, 46 L.Ed.2d 106 (1975) (allegation of breach is element in stating a cause of action under §301).

(2d Cir.1965). The Declaratory Judgment Act permits the party accused of breaching the agreement to seek a declaration of its rights and obligations under the agreement, without having to wait for the non-breaching party to bring an action to enforce the terms of the collective bargaining agreement.

Finally, a breach is not necessary to the maintenance of a declaratory judgment action under §301 when the moving party is arguably subject to conflicting obligations under two or more different agreements. Judge Garth's opinion in *Jersey Cent. Power & Light Co. v. Local Union 327, IBEW,* 508 F.2d 687 (3d Cir.1975), *vacated,* 425 U.S. 987, 96 S.Ct. 2196, 48 L.Ed.2d 812, *on remand,* 542 F.2d 8 (1976) (reaffirming prior decision on jurisdictional issue), is persuasive on this point. The similarity of the facts in *Jersey Central* to the facts in the present case underscores the precedential value of that opinion. In *Jersey Central,* the Company planned to lay off a substantial number of employees. Before it had breached or had been accused of breaching its collective bargaining agreement, the Company sought a declaratory adjudication of the proper method to effectuate the planned cut-backs. Under its collective bargaining agreement, the Company was required to implement lay-offs on a strict seniority basis. Under a conciliation agreement with the EEOC, however, a layoff accomplished by seniority alone would arguably be prohibited. Because it was "[c]onfronted with two apparently conflicting contracts" the court held that the Company had properly invoked the Court's jurisdiction.

The position Mack finds itself in is no different. It is faced on one hand with the right and the obligation to implement the terms of the new collective bargaining agreement, which it has begun to do. On the other hand, it has been told by the Union that a new collective bargaining agreement does not exist, that it must adhere to the terms of the old master agreement, and that the Union is "prepared to

take economic action" on October 20, 1987, the date the old master agreement was scheduled to expire. Under these conditions, Mack is entitled to a declaratory judgment even in the absence of a discrete breach.

The entertainment of actions for declaratory relief rests within the sound discretion of the court. *Davis v. Romney,* 490 F.2d 1360, 1369-70 (3d Cir.1974). I have exercised my discretion to proceed in this matter because the public interest is well served by the prompt resolution of the uncertainty that has surrounded Mack, its employees, and the economy of eastern Pennsylvania. In addition, this court takes cognizance of the public policy expressed by Congress in promoting labor peace and stability. *See* 29 U.S.C. §141(b) (1982) (policy of LMRA is to avoid industrial strife). Moreover, in light of the fact that Mack had partially performed its obligations and in view of the imminence of October 20, I determined that a declaratory judgment would "avoid . . . the 'accrual of avoidable damages to one not certain of his rights.' " *ACandS, Inc. v. Aetna Casualty and Surety Co.,* 666 F.2d 819, 823 (3d Cir.1981) (quoting *Dewey & Almy Chemical co. v. American Anode, Inc.,* 137 F.2d 68, 69 (3d Cir.), *cert. denied,* 320 U.S. 761, 64 S.Ct. 70, 88 L.Ed. 454 (1943)). I reach this decision bearing in mind that the purpose behind the enactment of LMRA was twofold: to promote industrial peace and responsibility, *Textile Workers Union v. Lincoln Mills,* 353 U.S. 448, 454-55, 77 S.Ct. 912, 916-17, 1 L.Ed.2d 972 (1957), and to allow for the development of a consistent body of labor law, *Local 174, Teamsters v. Lucas Flour Co.,* 369 U.S. 95, 82 S.Ct. 571, 7 L.Ed.2d 593 (1962); and that in effectuating these purposes §301 should be liberally interpreted, *Smith v. Evening News Ass'n,* 371 U.S. 195, 199-200, 83 S.Ct. 267, 269-70, 9 L.Ed.2d 246 (1962).

On the merits of this case, the Union contends that no contract was formed between the parties because the parties had been unable to resolve several disputes with respect to the contractual language to be used to memorialize the agreement between them. To resolve this issue I turn for

guidance to Judge Garth's opinion in *N.L.R.B. v. New York-Keansburg-Long Branch Bus*, 578 F.2d 472 (3d Cir.1978). In that case, the National Labor Relations Board petitioned the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit to enforce an order against an employer based upon a finding that the employer committed an unfair labor practice by refusing to execute a collective bargaining agreement after it had allegedly reached an oral agreement with the union.

The court refused to enforce the order because Judge Garth found no substantial evidence that an accord had been reached. In so doing, he enunciated several tests to determine whether a union and an employer had reached an actual agreement in regard to an alleged oral collective bargaining agreement. Judge Garth first opined that "[i]n the field of labor relations when the parties have agreed to the substantive terms and conditions of a contract, even though it may not be reduced to writing, they can nevertheless be held to its terms." 578 F.2d at 477.

The next focus of inquiry becomes whether, as a matter of fact, the union and the employer agreed on the material terms and conditions of the alleged collective bargaining agreement. If there is proof that the union and the employer agreed on the substantive terms of a collective bargaining agreement, then such an agreement becomes valid and binding on the parties. In examining whether an agreement has been reached the court must look to federal labor relations law and not state contract law. *Allis-Chalmers Corp. v. Lueck*, 471 U.S. 202, 211, 105 S.Ct. 1904, 1911, 85 L.Ed.2d 206 (1985) (questions relating to what the parties to a labor agreement agreed to are resolved by federal law). I find that there is no dispute on the vast majority of the provisions of the new master collective bargaining agreement.[3] More-

3. There were some minor disputes between the parties including whether or not Martin Luther King's birthday would be be observed on the Friday before Labor Day or on the designated national holiday. At the trial it became clear that the parties' intent is to observe the holiday as scheduled in January.

over, I find a substantial accord between the parties on all material terms of the new master agreement to have been reached at Crystal City.

Despite the manifest agreement between the parties, there were several issues raised at trial that merit discussion. The most important issue relates to Mack's agreement not to outsource to any further extent components used in the manufacturing of its trucks, and to maintain the production of certain truck models at certain facilities.

The parties agree that it had been their intent at Crystal City that there would be no further outsourcing during the term of the new agreement. After Crystal City the parties disagreed on what language should be used to express this intent. I find that they did not disagree as to what precisely "no further outsourcing" meant. The Union has three concerns. First, the Union does not want the company to be able to circumvent its agreement and begin manufacturing replacement models at other manufacturing facilities merely by changing the model number or name. The Union had vigorously insisted that all replacement models be manufactured in the same facility where the precursor was manufactured. Second, while the company desires an Act of God exclusion to outsourcing in order to protect it from calamities such as fire or earthquakes, the Union wants to make sure that the Act of God concept cannot be utilized to justify outsourcing otherwise prohibited by the new master agreement. Third, Mack has proferred language which provides that the prohibition against outsourcing would not prevent the implementation of improved methods of doing business which might, in turn, reduce employment. The Union is concerned that outsourcing otherwise prohibited by the master agreement might be validated by the claim that outsourcing itself is an improved method of doing business.

In construing a collective bargaining agreement, a court should construe the agreement as a whole. *H.C. Lawton,*

Jr., Inc. v. Truck Drivers, Chauffeurs and Helpers Local 384, 755 F.2d 324, 328 (3d Cir.1985). In addition, as it is for all contracts, the intent of the parties is of paramount concern. The basis underlying the entire agreement between the parties is that the employees would make certain wage and benefit concessions in return for better job security. Absolutely essential to the Union's assent were the guarantees it received with respect to outsourcing and the continued production of certain models at their current manufacturing locations. Indeed, based upon the evidence presented at trial, I find that the Union would not have entered into the new collective bargaining agreement without these guarantees which were the *quid pro quo* for certain wage and benefit concessions.

Mack stated at trial that it no longer disagreed with the Union's understanding. Therefore, by agreement of the parties, I find that the language disputes involving outsourcing and the continued production of various models at certain locations should be resolved in favor of the Union. The method for achieving this resolution will be discussed below.

At trial, although there first appeared to be some dispute, the parties agreed that Sections 3 and 5 of Article 28 in Plaintiff's Exhibit 80 ("P-80") would not be part of the new master agreement. The subject areas covered by these sections have been superseded by the parties' understanding with respect to outsourcing and job security. In addition, the parties agree that the language used in drafting Mack's protected employee group ("PEG") plan should not be construed to undercut in any way the job security and outsourcing provisions contained in other parts of the agreement. Moreover, Mack agrees with the Union with respect to those objections to P-80 raised by John Collins in his letter of October 8, 1987 concerning the first and third pages of letter 8, the "grow-in" provisions in letter 29, and the word "mutual" in letter 30.

The Union has submitted guidelines pertaining to the concept of quality of work life and the company has not seriously disagreed with them. The Union guidelines shall be included in the new master collective bargaining agreement.

Another issue that arose at trial concerned the funding of Mack's supplemental unemployment benefit ("SUB") plan. The parties agreed on the language that is to govern the plan, and Mack concedes that it is bound by that language. Because the parties disagree on how that language is to be interpreted, there is a dispute as to whether Mack has been properly funding the plan. This dispute should be resolved through the grievance and arbitration procedures.

The Union, on the last day of argument following the trial, contended that no agreement had ever been reached as to whether a PAYSOP wuld be established under the new agreement for bargaining unit employees. Mack responded that the parties had agreed that, as a result of the 1986 Tax Reform Act (which removes the provision authorizing PAYSOP's), this provision would be deleted from the new master agreement. The Union's counter-thrust was that the parties had agreed to establish some type of an alternative plan in lieu of a PAYSOP. I find that the Union's position on this point is unreasonable, without a shred of evidence to support it, and was manufactured late in the trial in order to avoid a finding that there had been substantial agreement as to the terms of the new master agreement.

Finally, there is a dispute between the parties regarding whether certain step increases in pension benefits are to apply to persons who retire after January 1, 1987, or only to those who retire after January 1, 1988. This issue seems to have been passed over at Crystal City and therefore no meeting of the minds was reached with respect to it. I find however that this provision is not "material" "essential" or "operative" term of the agreement. Persons who retire

between January 1, 1987 and January 1, 1988 will receive a pension and an additional lump sum even under Mack's understanding. The only outstanding issue concerns certain increases in lieu of the lump sum payment. Although these increases are immaterial to the agreement as a whole, they are not insignificant to the affected retirees and the parties are directed to negotiate this issue in good faith.

The Union has called to my attention no other disputes between it and Mack pertaining to the new master collective bargaining agreement. Consequently, I have no hesitancy in declaring this agreement to be in effect between the parties.

The final step is to ascertain exactly what document should be declared to be the master collective bargaining agreement between the parties. Mack has prepared plaintiff exhibit 80 ("P-80") which purportedly represents all of the agreed terms between the parties. I will declare P-80 as modified by this opinion to be the new master collective bargaining agreement between the parties, subject to the following exception: all matters pertaining to outsourcing and job security shall be controlled by the section entitled "Master Contract Modifications," paragraph 1 with subparagraphs (a) through (j) plus a final paragraph, of the memorandum of understanding submitted to the membership of Local 171 prior to the ratification vote by that local on the new master collective bargaining agreement (introduced at trial as plaintiff's exhibit 23).

I reach the following:

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. This court has subject matter jurisdiction to adjudicate plaintiff's claim for declatory relief pursuant to Section 301 of the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §§141-187 (1982) and the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. §§2201, 2202 (1982).

2. A new master collective bargaining agreement exists between Mack and the Union effective May 4, 1987, until November 3, 1992. The terms of this master collective bargaining agreement are set forth in plaintiff's exhibit 80 as modified by this opinion and by the record in this case.

3. The refusal of the Union to reduce the master collective bargaining agreement to writing was unreasonable and in violation of law.